THE GREATNES OF THE MYSTERIE OF GODLINES; Opened in several Sermons.

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TO THE

Right Worſhipful *Wil iam Johnſon* Maior of *Newcaſtle*,

With the Aldermen, Sheriff, Common Councel, and the reſt of that famous Corporation.

Honoured and Beloved,

IT is not any vain deſire to appear in Print that I preſent you with theſe Sheets, but theſe two reaſons have preſt me thereunto.

Firſt, becauſe I cannot now preach to your eares, I would leave ſomething before

your eyes that might quicken up your ſpirits to a holy remembrance of what you have formerly heard; for careful and obſervant reading doth imprint with more efficacy that which it may be did but paſſe more tranſiently thorough the ear; beſides, in reading a man may dwell on a notion until he hath ſuckt the ſpirits of it, and yet not loſe the next, which in hearing is hazardous; ſo that primarily my uſeleſsneſs to you (through ſickneſſe) in preaching hath provoked me, that if poſſible I might be a little uſeful to your ſoules by this.

2. I have attempted this work to leave a character and teſtimony of my deep ſenſe I have of your great favours to me; you have nurſed me as a Parent his Child: Now what have I to preſent you with but even this ſpiritual mite, which is ſeconded with many deſires for your eternal welfare; and this I muſt ſay, that I beleeve never more reſpects have been ſhown by any Corporation in England to the moſt grave and worthy Preachers among them, than you have ſhown to me, unworthy me. Thus I have given you a ſhort account of what moved me

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to this enterprize, I hope it will be candidly interpreted among you.

I have only one thing to adde (which all the Nation *may take notice of and wonder) concerning your happineſs, that theſe nine yeares, when all the* Nation *have been in a puzzle about errors, ſects, and ſchiſmes, even almoſt to bloud you have ſate as in a Paradiſe, no diſturbances in your Pulpits, no railings or diſputings, Presbyterians and Independents preaching in the ſame place, faſting and praying together, in heavenly harmony, expreſsing nothing but kindneſs to each other, in their meetings ready to help each other; and as for the errours of the times that have diſturbed ſo many Towns in* England, *it may be ſaid of* Newcaſtle *as of* Ireland, *the Aire is ſo pure no ſuch venemous creature can live there; and this hath been through the power of the Goſpel, and your careful Government.*

Now the Lord make you reach after immortality, take heed of this evil world. Oh that you may further prize and profit by that precious Goſpel which ſhines among you, and may this little Treatiſe adde one

cubit to your ſtature in grace, how will it rejoyce the ſoule of him who is

From my ſick Chamber in Ax-yard in *Kingſtreet* in *Weſtminſter.*

Yours to ſerve you in the Goſpel, if ever God recover my ſtrength,

Cuthbert Sydenham.

The

The Greatneſs of the Myſtery of Godlineſſe, Opened in ſeveral Sermons.

Sermon I.

1 Tim. 3. 16.

And without controverſie great is the Myſtery of Godlineſſe, which is, God manifeſted in the fleſh, juſtified in the Spirit, ſeen of Angels, preached unto the Gentiles, beleeved on in the world, and received up into glory.

THe Apoſtle in this Chapter ſutes his Exhortation to the divers Offices in the Church, and laies down their particular qualifications who ſhall be fit for ſuch places. God never cals any to places but he fits them, and he would have us looke to whom he hath qualified. It is not enough that men have publike vote for publike places,

places, but they muſt have ſutable endowments, a Biſhop that is a Paſtour muſt be blameleſſe; *v.* 2. So he that thinks to act for God muſt have qualifications from God; Gods Call hath ever his bleſſing and aſſiſtance. Now that *Timothy* might take ſpeciall notice of this, he tels him that he writ theſe things on Purpoſe that he might know how to behave himſelfe in the Church, which he cals the houſe of God, and the pillar and ground of truth, *ver.* 15. that is that which holds forth truth as the pillar doth the light that is ſet on it; The Apoſtle laies the weight of his worke, and all the Miniſters of the Goſpell, and heightens their Calling from the precioulneſſe of the truth that is to be manifeſt by them; and at laſt breakes forth into the great truths which they are to manifeſt, which are undeniably the great Myſtery of Godlineſſe in the world. *God was manifeſt in fleſh*, &c.

So that this is the ſum of all: Paſtors, and Teachers, and Elders, and all Officers of the Church, had need be men peculiarly qualified, that they may behave themſelves as becomes them in the Church; for that is as a Pillar of truth, and the great Myſtery of Godlineſſe is opened among them, they are to hold forth that Godlineſſe which is a great Myſtery. And it is as much as if he had ſaid, *Timothy*, I write theſe

theſe things to thee, and all the Miniſters of the Goſpell, that they looke to themſelves; for a great charge is committed to them, to be as pillars in Gods houſe, and to carry forth the greateſt myſtery in the heaven and earth, that upon which depends the great weight of Salvation. Oh, if theſe that are to diſpenſe the Goſpell did but know their work, what a glorious and great Diſpenſation is committed to them, how would they labour to behave themſelves in that great charge?

Here be many things obſervable in the words.

1. The Preface, or Porch.
2. The Fabrick it ſelfe.

In the Preface is 1. The manner of his ſpeech, and that twofold: firſt, the affection he ſpeakes it with, he is ſo as a man in rapture that ſpeakes in pure ſentences, *without Controverſie*, &c. He breakes off as it were from all that he had formerly ſpoken, and ſits down and wonders at the greatneſſe of that Myſtery which the Goſpell held forth.

2. That he ſpeakes of its Godlineſſe.

3. The deſcription he gives it, he cals it a Myſtery, and that with this Adjunct, that it is a great Myſtery.

4. The confidence he ſpeakes it in, *without Controverſie*, ὁμολογουμένως, *manifeſtè*, *ex confeſſo*,

feſſo, without doubt or queſtion it is ſo; none that ever knew God, or ever felt the power of it, but ſaid it was a great myſtery.

Then ſecondly, you have this Myſtery unfolded, and cleared up in theſe ſeverall particulars of it, which he deduceth to theſe ſix heads:

God manifeſted in the fleſh.
Juſtified in the ſpirit.
Seen of Angels.
Preached unto the Gentiles.
Beleeved on in the World.
Received up into Glory.

So that here is Truth, and that truth is Godlineſſe, and that godlineſſe is a great Myſtery, and all that is laid out in various manifeſtations of God. Here are many glorious things to be inſiſted on; all Divinity comprehended in theſe few lines, the very marrow and pith, the foundation and fountaine of all that we need to know, or to be acquainted with. And before we come to Launch out in the Ocean, we muſt caſt an eye upon the Connexion of the words.

Obſer. Firſt, That which the Apoſtle cals Truth in the former verſe, he cals Godlineſſe here; Truth is not a fancy or notion, but it is holineſſe it ſelfe, and none can know Truth in the nature and power of it, but they muſt be godly.

Firſt,

Firſt, Truth is the patterne and platforme of Holineſs, it is the mould of Godlineſſe; that is godlineſſe which is conformable to divine truth; Truth is Gods mind, and godlineſs is a ſoule conformable unto that mind, or transformed into that truth; therefore the Apoſtle when he would relate the godlineſſe of the *Romans*, *Rom.* 6. 17. he ſaith, they obeyed that doctrine or truth into the forme of which they were delivered, εἰς ὃν παρεδόθητε τύπον, he makes the truth of the Goſpell as a type, a mould into which they were caſt.

Secondly, godlineſſe is truth, becauſe truth works godlineſſe; Chriſt praies the Father to ſanctifie them with truth, *John* 17. 17. It is the nature of truth to ſanctifie and worke holineſſe; truth is light, and life, and doth as the Sun, both enliven and enlighten all ſoules on whom its beames ſhine; errour never makes holy, though it may be in a holy perſon, and ſhadowed with the holineſſe in whom it is; but all the truths of Chriſt they are as fire that convert ſoules to its own nature; whatever holineſs is in the ſoule is no more but truth digeſted, turned into life and ſpirit.

Uſe. So that firſt let not the world miſtake themſelves concerning truth. It is not enough that men have abundance of notions concerning God or Chriſt, except it be holy truth, ſancti-

ſanctifying truth, this world is growing exceeding knowing, men boaſt of many great and myſterious truths which they know, but where is godlineſs? Truth without godlineſs is as an Oracle without a voice, a body without a ſoule, as letters in braſs without life. Brethren, what is it for a man to have found a peece of Gold when he is hungry and can find no meat? It is cleare men know little of truth, they are ſo unacquainted with godlineſs? that is truth indeed which moulds the ſoule into the nature of God, which draws a ſoule into pure fellowſhip with God, which elevates the ſpirit into the glory of God, which turnes all things into life and power in the ſoule, other things are but notions; to have truth written in thy Bible and not in thy heart, what is it? For thee to have a form of truth in thy underſtanding, the letters tranſcribed in thy fancy, and not be turned ſpiritually into that form, godlineſs is nothing elſe but truth baptized in the ſoul, truth with a new name; that ſoul hath not a ſparkle of truth which hath not a motion of life from it, truth came out of Gods boſome, and is the manifeſtation of his life and glory, and it will turne the heart ſutable to that life.

Uſe 2. Would you know what it is to be godly, not to have a form of this and that way

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of Religion of our owne making, but to be conformable to divine truth: as good principles and notions without divine impreſſions of it on the ſoul are nothing; ſo godlineſs without a principle of truth to lead it is ſuperſtition; as truth works godlineſs, ſo godlineſs lives anſwerable unto truth; godlineſs conſiſts not in any form of worſhip ſet us by men, though never ſo glorious, but by being one with truth, in ſerving God after his own mind and heart.

Uſe 3. Againe, know who are the knowing and the godly men; what thoſe who barely and nakedly confeſs the Articles of faith, who beleeve in a curſory manner what is ſaid of God and Chriſt in the Goſpel; no, but thoſe which are made godly by theſe truths. It is impoſſible for any to know Jeſus Chriſt, and the myſtery of the Goſpel, but they muſt have the life of it in them; if men will judge as God doth of their knowledge by their hearts, how few knowing men ſhall we have in the world? God values mens knowledge by their affections, by the value they ſet on truth; all our knowledge and ſpeculations of truth without godlineſs is but a humane knowledge of divine things; you know much, you ſee great myſteries of truth, what life, what ſpirit hath it put in you? If you have ſeen Jeſus Chriſt

Chriſt as the Center and ſubſtance of truth, where are the transformations, and the raiſings of your ſoules after this Chriſt apprehended? When principles are turned into practice, and ſpeculations into power, and notions into ſpirit, then your truth is godlineſs.

Will you know the reaſon why there is ſo much profeſſion of truth, and ſo little practice of godlineſs, why the heads of men have ſo out-grown their hearts?

I think it be this; either firſt that which men call truth is errour, or the fancies of their own braine, not the Viſion on the mount: Or elſe, ſecondly, they have but the bare and leane apprehenſions, do not ſee them in their own nature; men place Religion in knowledge, and godlineſſe in a meere conceit; doubtleſſe if truth were ſeene in her naked glory, without her hood, or gowne, only as ſhe comes out of the boſome of Jeſus Chriſt, the beames of her glory would pierce the very hearts and ſoules of men, and leave impreſſions of an immortall nature on their ſpirits. How can ſoules ſee Jeſus Chriſt as the manifeſtation of God, behold him as one received up into glory, and ſitting at the right hand of God, and have it as truth within him, and not be drawn out in ſtrong deſires of Communion with him, and have the reflexions of his holineſs and glory

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on the heart? What is godlineſs but God ſhining in light, and working in life in the ſoule? Take thy picture of truth which thou thinkeſt thou haſt in thy underſtanding, and ſit down and rejoyce in the high-flown notions of God and Chriſt, (thou knowing Profeſſor) while poore ſoules enjoy the life, and power, the beauty, and ſubſtance of all truth within their hearts.

Obſ. 2. The ſecond thing of worth is this; How full *Pauls* heart is when he begins to ſpeake of the things of the Goſpel; like a man that is full of griefe or joy, longs to have vent, and breakes off on a ſudden from his former diſcourſes, ſo doth the Apoſtle; he was to ſwim out into a great deep, and his heart cannot hold, he ſpeaks as a man overmarched with matter, that is faine to ſpeake broken expreſſions, *without controverſie*, &c.

High manifeſtations of God ſhould be expreſſed with great affections; as God let out himſelfe, ſo our hearts muſt be taken: a little love and admiration will not ſerve when God manifeſts himſelfe in a myſtery, the beſt frame of ſpirit a ſoule can be in when he is meditating, or to ſpeake of Goſpel-myſteries is to be aſtoniſhed at them, as one that knows not where to begin or end; you never have known the myſteries of God which have not admired them.

Uſe All the uſe I would make of this to you, is, to get affections ſutable to manifeſtations, to riſe as God riſes. Oh let not your hearts be low when God is high in love and glory. Souls which are wrapt up in the boſome of glorious enjoyments, that apprehend God in his diſcoveries of himſelf, cannot but be loſt in the thoughts of them; then are your ſoules in a ſpiritual frame when they work in the ſight of God in Chriſt, and ſutable to the openings of his heart; the more your hearts are full of theſe apprehenſions, the more you will breake forth in admirations.

But now to the words themſelves, and in them firſt of the Preface; *without Controverſy*, &c.

The Apoſtle ſpeaks as one ſo confident that all did grant it to be truth, that there need no farther debate but the laying down the very things themſelves.

The word (ὁμολογουμένως) ſignifies an abſolute and cleare confeſſion of a thing without doubt or ſcruple, and it is as much as if the Apoſtle had ſaid by the confeſſion of all, it is ſo; it is a confeſſed truth by all the Saints, not one diſputing or denying it, that godlineſs is a great myſtery; in all theſe particulars I need give you no confirmation at all of it, it is without queſtion, to deny it is to be wilfully blind and deſperate. *Obſ.*

Obſ. That there are principles and myſteries of godlineſs cleare and undeniable to all the Saints.

He doth not ſay, I confeſs it is ſo, and all that I have converſed withall, but all that have had any light of the ſpirit confeſs this to be true; it is a thing generally received without any controverſie at all: In the opening this I ſhall ſhew,

1. That there are principles of godlineſs as of other things.

2. That they are confeſt by the Saints.

For the firſt: As there are principles in every Art or Science, which are as the foundations of other things, ſo likewiſe in divinity; ſuch as the Apoſtle, *Heb.* 6. 1. cals (θεμέλιον) the foundation, and *Heb.* 5. 12. (στοιχεῖα) the firſt principles, and now cals (μυστήριον) the myſtery: and to prove,

1. Becauſe divinity or godlineſs is the moſt demonſtrative and certain knowledge of things that can be, now principles are the foundation of all demonſtration; if there were not principles, there could be no certainty of knowledge. No man could ſpeak any thing, no man could beleeve any thing, if there were not common and generall foundations or principles to build upon; therefore this muſt be granted, that God hath left ſomething in Religion which is without diſpute.

2. If there were not ſet and abſolute principles, there could be no common faith, or common experience among the Saints; none could know the condition of one another, or be able to judge of one another, neither of things themſelves. Now the Apoſtle ſpeakes of a common faith; and in another place there is but one faith, one baptiſme, one hope among all the Saints, 2 *Pet.* 1. 2. That other Foundation no man can lay than what is laid, which is Jeſus Chriſt, 1 *Cor.* 3. 11. in *Gal.* 1. no preaching of another Goſpel, no, though by an Angel from heaven. But I need prove that no farther.

2. Theſe principles are confeſt by all the Saints, this is that the Apoſtle aimes at, that none of the Saints ſcrupled this, That Godlineſs was a great myſtery in every one of the particulars mentioned. Conſider,

1. That which belongs to a Saint as a Saint, to his very being he cannot be ignorant of, as that Jeſus Chriſt died, and by his merits we are pardoned, that from him is all life, that God was manifeſted in him, and accepts us by him; that we come to him by faith, and enjoy him by our union; theſe things go to the conſtitution of a Saint, faith towards our Lord Jeſus, and repentance towards God; he is not a Saint which knows not this, for they are

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the principles of his being; indeed the largeneſs and extent of theſe principles. The priviledge of his being he may be ignorant, for they are ſucceſſively manifeſted, as the glory of his union, and the fulneſs of grace, and the rich aſſurance of it to his own ſoule, theſe he may be doubtful in; but to queſtion this, whether Chriſt be the Son of God, hath died, and is riſen againe, theſe he cannot be ignorant of, for his faith is vaine if theſe things be not true and granted by him, he is no Saint if Chriſt be no Saviour; but for the manner of making out this, of what full efficacy Chriſts Death and Reſurrection is, and the like, and the manner of applying this, he may be exceeding darke in.

2. The principles of godlineſs are laid down ſo poſitive and ſo plaine, that the light that every Saint receives makes him beleeve them; theſe things are expreſt in abſolute termes, that Chriſt is the only Saviour, and nothing to be joyned with him; that juſtification is freely by grace; that in *Adam* all have ſinned; that all which are in Chriſt are new Creatures, with ſuch like expreſſions, ſo that the firſt and moſt common light of faith aſſents to them: there be ſome things in the Word, in which there lies a great deale of beauty and glory, not ſo nakedly expreſt, nor ſo obvious to

every underſtanding, as of the time of juſtification, the manner of our union, many things of the Kingdom of Chriſt, and other things which may admit a Controverſie, they being not ſo cleare in themſelves.

3. Principles that are abſolutely fundamentall, God hath ſet them down as the objects of faith to be beleeved on, not diſputed. And though we cannot ſee the reaſon of them, yet we are to beleeve them; their demonſtration lies in Gods teſtimony of them. Gods word or things is a Chriſtian reaſon.

Uſe. Oh that in this ſceptick age we would but obſerve this rule, to hold to principles: men are grown to queſtion every thing, fundamentals cannot ſcape; ſome mens queſtions, moſt mens criticks are above their judgements: Some think Religion lies in a queſtioning all things. That good notion of ſearching after truth deceives many by miſapprehenſion; the way to loſe truth is to queſtion the principles on which they are built; the Apoſtle ſpeaks unto *Timothy* (μὴ λογομαχεῖν) not to ſtrive about words which tend to no profit, 2 *Tim.* 2. 14. and to hold faſt the form of wholſome words or doctrines (ὑποτύπωσιν) 2 *Tim.* 1. 13. an expreſs ſyſteme of principles. In all Sciences ſomething muſt be taken for granted; Philoſophers have made

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a juſt Law, *Contra principia non eſt diſputandum*; they hiſs at men that ſhall deny principles received by all Schollars, grounded on the abſolute Law of Reaſon; for there muſt be ſome granted rules and principles that men diſpute by, elſe it will be but a babble, no diſpute; all argumentatian is concerning the application of rules, and deductions from principles: So it is in divinity, there be ſome truths are as foundation ſtones, muſt not be touched leſt the whole building fall with it. I blame not Saints for ſearching after truth, but condemne that ſtint of mens ſpirits to looke after no more than they have known; great and noble ſpirits love to be reaching after perfection, there is much to be diſcovered of the myſtery of the Goſpel, of the glory and beauty of truth. But this I urge, that there are ſome things muſt be without controverſie, ſome truths that are written as with a Sun beame, confeſt and acknowledged by all, that muſt be beleeved, not argued.

There is a twofold queſtioning of things.

1. Doubting whether they be ſo or no, that is dangerous, becauſe men ſhall never want their ſcruples, if they will diſpute thoſe things which are ſupernatural; what God hath by his owne teſtimony in the Word, and in the hearts of all the Saints put out of queſtion,

It is *Crimen læſæ Majeſtatis* but to name in doubting.

2. Men queſtion things to be more cleered and confirmed in them, not ſo much for ſatisfaction of the truth of them, as deſire to ſee the farther beauty and excellency of them; this is commendable, for Saints to ſtudy all the principles wherein God hath manifeſted himſelfe, that he may have his heart more ſet upon them. So the *Bereans* they were noble, they would enquire into the Doctrine that *Paul* preached, and *Paul* commends them for it, and ſaith, they were (εὐγενέστεροι) men of better breeding; whatever comes from men you may queſtion, and ſearch againe whether it be ſo or no; but what you find in the Word laid down in expreſs termes you may not queſtion, but beleeve; though yet you may labour to be more cleare, and to have the ſame thing more demonſtrative, and more ſpiritual to you; the Apoſtle unto *Timothy*, that the things he had heard of him among many witneſſes he ſhould (παράθου πιστοῖς ἀνθρώποις) commit unto faithfull men, who may teach the ſame to others, 2 *Tim.* 2. 2. the Apoſtle would have the ſame Doctrine to go from hand to hand, and be transferred unto others; for new principles to be revealed I expect not, but thoſe in a new way, more of truth

truth in a new kind of glory, more full and enriching; the light that the Saints have received is the ſame for kind and nature, but not for degree, therefore the Apoſtle ſaith, If we or an Angel from heaven ſhall preach another Goſpel, that is different from what is preached in the revelation of Chriſt, let him be accurſed, *Gal.* 1. 8, 9. It is one thing to preach another Goſpel, and another thing to have that ſame Goſpel opened more gloriouſly, and to have the ſparklings of it more ſtrong and glorious. He that will know no more than he hath known, is proud, and knows nothing; and he that will know any thing contrary, or more than theſe principles of godlineſs containes, and will by improvement come up to, will be as one in the darke that knows not where he goes; to ſtick on the bare principles and go no farther, is as a child that learnes his Catechiſme, and thinks he needs no more learning; and to ſeeke to know much with caſting off principles, is as one that would learne the Hebrew or Greek, and yet will caſt aſide the Characters and Rules. That ſoule can never miſcarry in divine knowledge, that holding the foundation builds according to that. Let your ſtructure be as high and glorious as can be, ſo your foundation be ſure; for a man to make a long and myſterious diſcourſe, and

accent

accent every expreſſion, with the beſt language, and yet neither he, nor any that heares, can tell neither what he aimes at, or to what head or principle naturall to reduce it, how ridiculous is he in all wiſe mens eyes; all the fine and curious webs of ſpeculation which men ſpin, and theſe ſtately ſtructures in their own fancies will all be cut in ſunder, and fall down, if they be not founded on the firſt, ſame, and eternall principles of godlineſſe. God hath ſaved all the Saints by one and the ſame, way, Chriſt, and faith; And though theſe things are more glorioufly expreſt now than before, and the ſame heart more opened in the ſame Chriſt, and faith acted with greater ſtrength and cleereneſs than formerly; yet the ſame love, and faith, and Chriſt continues ſtill. It is a pittifull thing to ſee ſoules ſtick ſtill on the bare principles, and not launch out into that deep myſtery which is conteined in them; and as ſad it is to ſee men leave theſe principles and hug their own fancies. Oh Beloved, that unity in the ſpirit lies much in the oneneſſe and union of the foundation. This one Principle, That *God* was manifeſt in fleſh, and this Chriſt made a Mediatour of ſoules, what an eternall ground of comfort doth it afford, thou needeſt not goe ſeek a new manifeſtation of this *God*; the ſtudying but of this

this one, may take up all thy thoughts every minute and moment of thy life, and entertain thee with freſh and new wonders of *Glory*. Every one of theſe Principles are a myſtery, and myſteryes, though about the ſame things, are opened but by degrees. Angels deſire to let out their thoughts in the reviewing of theſe unſearchable riches. There is not a line or expreſſion of Chriſt in the *Scripture*, but is matter enough for a whole Age to Comment upon; ſo that thou needeſt not leave old principles for new diſcoveries; for in them thou mayeſt find ſucceſſive ſweetneſſe.

The Apoſtle in the 2 *Coloſſians* v. 2. ſpeakes of a full aſſurance of underſtanding, which the Saints may come unto, τῆς πληροφορίας τῆς συνέσεως. That is the ſame with what the Text ſaith. To be ſo fully aſſured in our underſtandings, of all the truths of the *Goſpel*, that nothing can ſhake us. To have all things ſo demonſtrative and cleare, and our judgements ſo convinced and ſetled in them, that we may ſee round about all the objections that can be made of them: Doubting in judgement, makes doubting in conſcience and faith. As your principles are, ſo your practiſe will be; therefore you had need have them cleare. The holding of ſome things are ſo odious, that a Saint ſhould not anſwer them,

them, but contemne them. So *Paul*, when this objection came in, that we might ſinne becauſe grace abound. *Rom.* 6. 1. What, doth he ſtand to confute it? no, he will not honour it with an anſwer, but abominates the thoughts of it; *God* forbid, ſaith he.

To conclude this with a ground of comfort to all Saints. Your ſalvation is without controverſie; the grounds of your eternal peace, are not to be ſo much as queſtioned. All things are carryed on in a myſtery; yet ſo ſure, as that it is death to qveſtion them: You may as well doubt, whether there be a *God*, as doubt whether the everlaſting foundation of your peace can be removed: There is nothing for you to doe in this, but to believe; as theſe things in themſelves are paſt diſpute, ſo doe you believe that they be without doubt to you. *Get* your aſſurances as unqueſtionable as *Gods* foundation; for that ſtands ſure, and hath an eternal ſeal unto it; put your propriety in this myſtery out of diſpute, that you may be able to ſay without all controverſy, this myſtery is in me; and as *God* was manifeſt in fleſh, and I may not doubt it, ſo *God* is manifeſt in me, and I dare not deny it. Art thou in Ieſus Chriſt, who is the ſumme of this great myſtery? why then; let Devils and men queſtion thy ſalvation, it cannot hinder thy comfort.

Beloved,

Beloved, get things at ſuch a paſſe in your ſoules, that all things are beyond diſpute in your hearts, either concerning the principles, or the application of them to your conſcience, that you may come to the full aſſurance of Underſtanding in the myſteries of the Goſpel, not to doubt of the truth of them; ſo come to the full aſſurance of Faith, not to queſtion your part in them. That as this is ſure, that Chriſt is, ſo you may be as ſure, that you are in Chriſt.

God hath not left the things of ſalvation, the great truths of his Goſpel, to be judged by the pur-blind eye of a probable judgement, but by the clear and open eye of Faith. And though they ſeem to lye never ſo contrary to the received principles of reaſon; yet if they have God's ſtampe, they muſt be beleeved by our Faith.

If we may but gueſſe and conjecture at things of the *Goſpel*, what a miſerable condition were we in? what a diſpargement to the divine light of Truth, that it is not ſo demonſtrative, and fit for knowledge, as the maximes of Nature? Indeed as the Apoſtle ſaith, 1 *Cor.* 2. 8. The natural man with all his accompliſht parts and light of reaſon, cannot perceive the things of *God*; the utmoſt of his knowledge is but conjecturall and common; he ſees not into the

the nature of theſe truths. But the poreſt ſoule which hath the leaſt beame of ſupernatural light in his Underſtanding, beholds ſuch infallible cleerneſs in the mind or *God*, that his whole ſoule fals down before the manifeſtation of it.

Ob. But can a ſoule be as much without controverſy and doubt of his own ſalvation, and of his being wrapt up in that Myſtery, as he is of the truth of the things themſelves?

Sol. I anſwer. Yes; the ſame that reveales the one reveales the other, the ſame un-erring ſpirit that revealed the myſtery in it ſelfe, reveales it to the ſoule, and the ſame cloſeth with the light of the one, as with the other; why may not a ſoule be aſſured, that what the Holy Ghoſt hath written in his heart, is as certaine, as what he hath writ in the word? Doubtleſſe, the worke of the ſpirit in the fleſhly tables of our heart, is as certaine; and I may have as ſure knowledge of it, as of the writing in Tables of ſtone, or in paper; for the Miſtery of God in the heart, is but a tranſcript of what is in the word: yea, doubtleſſe it is more glorious then the bare expreſſion of the myſtery in words. What makes the ſoule be fully parſwaded, that this in the Bible is the word of *God*, that theſe truths are certaine? but becauſe of that light and demonſtration

ſtration of the ſpirit, which accompanies it, every one ſees not that infallible glory and beauty in theſe things, only takes them up in a general and cuſtomary notion; but in the Saints they know it is ſo, as they know that ſnow is white, and the ſame light and power of the ſpirit, aſſures their ſoules, that what is written in their hearts, is as abſolute, an undenyable truth. The inequality of light from the ſpirit, cauſeth the inequality of knowledge and aſſurance, concerning them both. And the Apoſtle ſpeaks as confidently of his own ſalvation, as he ſpeaks of the Truth of the Goſpel; we know that if this earthly houſe, *&c.* 2 *Cor.* 5. 1. And we know we are of *God*, though all the world lyes in wickedneſſe: And there is a full aſſurance of Faith, as of underſtanding. Oh look therefore to come into an unqueſtionable condition; once thou haſt it demonſtrative that thou art in Chriſt; take heed of queſtioning it. As every word which *God* hath ſpoken, ſhall not paſſe away unfulfilled; ſo every worke which *God* hath wrought in thee, ſhall be perfected, *God* giving the ſame aſſurance to thy ſpirit, as he doth to his owne Truth.

SERMON

SERMON II.

1 Tim. 3. 16.

And without controverſie great is the Myſtery of Godlineſſe, &c.

IN theſe words, there is a full and ſummary comprehenſion of the deepeſt divine truths that ever came out of Gods heart, and a ſeal of confirmation added to the aſſurance of them; they are not things which hang on uncertaine grounds, but have ſuch demonſtrations within themſelves, that they are *without all controverſy*, confeſt abſolutely by al Saints; not but that ſome doe deny them, but that in themſelves they are to be beleeved by the Saints. There is no place in all the Scripture, that in one verſe, doth Epitomize all Divinity, as this; that I may call it a Map of both worlds, wherein at once you may behold all that, which would coſt you all your life to travell over, and ſee in the fulneſſe of its Glory. All

All Divinity may be reduced to two heads: Gods manifeſtation in Chriſt, and Chriſts manifeſtation in us; God in Him, and He in us; and both theſe are laid out to the full in the Text.

We may well admire the fullneſs, and ſhortneſſe of Divine expreſſion in the Scripture, that ſo much ſhould be wrapt up in ſo little; more then to have *Homers Iliads* compriz'd in a nut-ſhell. Turn over all the Volumes of Nature, all the large writings of Prophane or Divine Authors, they containe not ſo much matter as one of theſe expreſſions will hold forth unto us.

That which I ſhall begin with, is the generall deſcription of Divinity, which is laid down in theſe words;

Great is the Myſtery of Godlineſſe.

Ευσέβειας.

Wherein you have, firſt, the thing deſcribed, that is *Godlineſſe*; or elſe you have,

The ſubject, *Godlineſſe*.
The predicate, *Myſtery*.
The adjunct, a *Great Myſtery*.

2. The deſcription it ſelfe, it is a *Myſtery*.
3. The adjunct, our Title to expreſſe by, it is a *Great Myſtery*.

The Apoſtle cannot containe himſelfe in

ordinary expreſſions ; to ſay it was a myſtery is an exceeding large expreſſion beyond our apprehenſions ; but in that he cals it a great myſtery , he raiſeth our thoughts , and looſeth our underſtanding.

This obſerve by the way , you can never ſpeake too high of, nor admire too much any thing of the Goſpel ; when you have ſpoken to the utmoſt , and have loſt your ſelfe and your hearers , yet then you are below what glory is conteined in them ; you may ſpeake too much of any creature, and preſently tranſgreſſe in your commendations, but it is impoſſible that ever any expreſsions ſhould reach Goſpell-myſtery ; *Hyperboles* in the world are the excretion of our frothy wits, and ſerve but only to indulge our corrupt affections ; but as one ſaith , *Deus & Cœlum non patitur hyperbolen* , all the height of expreſſions and wit ſtrained through the narroweſt and pureſt fancy can never be too high in expreſsing Goſpel-glory. Gods own ſpirit is as it were ſtreightned , and at a loſſe for expreſsions to ſet forth the deep myſteries of the Goſpel ; and though what is ſpoken of them be proper, yet they are far under the things themſelves, and no more than Pictures and Phantaſmes to the reality of thoſe things themſelves. What words can be given to ſet forth inviſible and immortal

immortal, and immenſe glory. God hath help'd our ſenſes and underſtandings by thoſe expreſsions, though in all that is written he hath ſpoken below himſelfe; if a man ſhould paint the glory of the ſun, what colours could he uſe, or how would he limb out the nature of a ſoule? why ſpiritual myſteries are far more inviſible and glorious.

1. I ſhall begin in the firſt place with the ſubject of the propoſition, that is Godlineſs.

2. Shew that it is myſtery.

3. That is is a Great myſtery.

That every word as well ſingle as compounded may have its weight.

For the firſt, the word (εὐσέβειαν) ſignifies the right worſhipping of God in the general ſignification of it; and it is uſed by the heathens to expreſſe the worſhip of their Gods: But in that notion it is not meant here; beſides, what was ſaid the laſt time of the nature of *Godlineſs*, in regard of the communion of the two expreſsions truth and godlineſs, I ſhal proceed more particularly to expreſs the nature of it.

It is uſed three waies in Scripture.

1. For the whole doctrine of the *Goſpel*, as a generall word which containes whatever is demonſtrated concerning *God*; ſo it is called the doctrine which is according to god-

lineſs, 1 Tim. 6. 3. thus godlineſſe is truth.

2. It is put for the inward worke of all theſe truths on the heart, for the gracious qualifications of a ſoule ſutable to the truths of the Goſpèl; they are put both together by the Apoſtle, *Tit.* 1. 1, 2. the acknowledgement of the truth which is after godlineſs, it imports the inward frame of the ſoule in conformity to the truths which are godlineſs.

3. It is put for the holy walkings of a Saint in the world from the patterne of theſe ſpiritual truths, 1 *Tim.* 4. 7. exerciſe thy ſelfe in godlineſs, that is, in all the waies of holineſs; by godlineſs here is meant the whole ſum of divinity, the circumference of all Religion, eſpecially that which contains the great contrivance of Gods wiſdome and love in the Goſpel, and the manifeſtation and working of it in us; It is not meant barely of the truths themſelves, but of the workes of theſe truths in the *Saints*.

So that godlineſs conſiſts in the light of truth, and in the life of grace; God manifeſting himſelfe in the light of truth, and working in the life of love and grace in the heart.

There is a forme of godlineſs which the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, 2 *Tim.* 3. 5. a meere externall profeſſion and garbe of godlineſs, there is no myſtery in that, men may take up a curious

curious picture of holineſs without much ado, nature can reach that myſtery; but there is a power of godlineſs which conſiſts in the life and ſpirit of truth in the ſoule, that is a myſtery.

Will you know then what godlineſs is? It is the openings of Gods glory in its ſelfe, and the workings of it gloriouſly in the ſoule. Godlineſs lies not in the bare expreſſion of words, nor in the externall forme of profeſſion of theſe words: But it lies in the divine glory of God which is wrapt up in theſe words, and the gracious diſpoſitions and affections of the ſoule to theſe things; What a great matter is it for a man to confeſs Jeſus Chriſt to be the Son of God, to pray and expreſs outward words accordingly: But to ſee the myſtery of that glory which is in this that Chriſt is *Gods* Son, and to have the powerful influence of it in the ſoule, this is godlineſs, and that which is called a great myſtery.

Thus then the whole manifeſtation of *God* in the *Goſpel*, all the actings of his glory in truth, and all thoſe truths wrought in the ſoul, is this godlineſs which the Apoſtle well cals a great myſtery; though this muſt be added, that the Apoſtle eſpecially aimes here at the truths themſelves, and *Gods* manifeſtation of his glory in them.

Now ſecondly, This he cals a myſtery; It is a high expreſsion, and worthy to be appropriated unto godlineſs; and the Holy Ghoſt ever makes uſe of it when he would ſet forth the unexpreſsible nature of Goſpel-truth; therefore to open it: or

1. It ſignifies ſome ſecret and hidden thing that is above vulgar apprehenſion; its word that comes from (μύω) which ſignifies to ſhut up, and hide a thing that none may find it and know where it is, as men hide jewels and precious things from common hands; therefore *Daniel* ſaith, It is God in heaven that reveales myſteries or ſecret things, *Dan.* 2. 28. Thus godlineſs is a myſtery hidden from the eyes of thouſands, hidden in Gods own breaſt from everlaſting, and as the Apoſtle expreſſeth in *Eph.* 3. *hidden from generations of men.* The Goſpel is Gods ſecret, that which is his boſome counſel. Angels nor men could not have known it, if God had not revealed it; ſo that it is a myſtery which without revelation is unknown, that which cannot be demonſtrated or argued out, but its nature conſiſts in revelation. Among the heathen they had their myſteries in their temples which they muſt not diſcover; therefore there was an Image before the Temple with his finger before his mouth, ſhewing that they muſt be ſilent in diſcovering hidden

hidden myſteries. Though the Goſpel be now revealed, yet it is a myſtery, becauſe once it was kept ſo ſecret.

2. And which follows from thence, that is a myſtery which hath any thing in its owne nature which is not obvious, and which lies not open to the quick and preſent apprehenſions of men; as ſome things in nature are ſaid to be myſteries, and in goverment there are *arcana imperii*, hidden things of ſtate that the vulgar cannot pry into; ſecret wheeles that move many actions which they cannot ſee move, only do behold the outward action; the things of the Goſpel are *arcana Dei*; though we ſee the things done, yet we ſee not theſe inviſible glorious wheels which did act them; and thus though the thing it ſelfe be revealed, yet becauſe the reaſons of them lye under ground they are called myſteries; thus the converſion of the Gentiles, and the calling of the Jews are both called myſteries, *Rom.* 11. thus divine truth are myſteries; thou heareſt of Chriſt, and haſt manifeſtations of God to thee, but alas the infinite reaſon God hath acted from, the ſecret wheels that have run along in every vein of Gods love, that is unknown; who hath ſearched his counſels, ſaith the Apoſtle? All Gods actions to us they have come from infinite and unſearchable

counſels; go into a Chymiſts ſhop, there thou findeſt ſeverall extractions of mettals which thou ſeeſt, and taſteſt, but how he did it thou know'ſt not; that is a myſtery to thee, what art he uſed in ſo rare a thing which to thy eye ſeemes contrary and impoſsible; godlineſſe hath been acted in ſuch an inviſible way that it may well be called a myſtery: How hath the Load-ſtone puſled all the heads of the greateſt ones in the world, that they have left it as a myſtery, a thing only to be beleeved, but the reaſon not known, only have reduced its power under a general notion of Sympathy, and all, becauſe men knew not the occult reaſons of its nature. That God ſhould carry himſelfe in ſuch a hidden way of glory that none can find out his ſteps but only by the effects of it, and that we can only ſay it is ſo, but not how, or why it is ſo, is the *myſtery* of godlineſs.

3. That is a *myſtery*, whoſe inward nature and excellency cannot be expreſs'd, but is wrapt up in outward figures and repreſentations, that which is ſo glorious in its own Nature, as it cannot be ſeen or manifeſted to us, but by the intervention of ſome externall medium. Thus marriage is ſaid to be a great myſtery becauſe it is ſet to convay the hidden and myſtical Marriage between Chriſt and the Church. *Eph.*

Eph. 5. One would have thought all along that Chapter; he ſpoke in a literall ſence of marriage, but at laſt he ſums up all; this a *great myſtery*: But I ſpeak concerning Chriſt and the Church. Thus all the Goſpell in generall, and in particular, is full of *myſteries*; Its owne Nature is vailed in words and outward Types; Gods relations to us and Chriſts, under the notions of Husband and Wife, Father and Children; God compared to light; Chriſt ſet out by a Lyon, a Lambe, a Shepherd: Grace expreſs'd by gold and ſilver, and precious ſtones: Heaven by Paradiſe. All which things doe rather vaile, then expreſe theſe hidden glories in them, and all theſe titles which are contain'd the nature of things far above them. And under all theſe is covered the realtie that God is to the ſoule. As *Hieroglyphicks* doe denote ſomething that is internall; ſo doe all the expreſſions of Scripture, and all the manifeſtations of God, but repreſent ſome hidden glorie that at firſt we cannot perceive. Therefore Chriſt delivers the Goſpel in Parables, and tels his Diſciples; *Unto you it is given to know the Myſteries of the Kingdome.* God makes many ſhapes and appearances of theſe inward beauties, that we may come to learn what they mean, by theſe ſenſible things. As ſome ſtately pictures are covered over with a Curtaine,

Curtaine, that every one that comes into the room, cannot ſee them: So is it with the things of Heaven; they are repreſented in groſſe bodies, which is as a Curtaine before them, and untill that be drawn, none can behold them. The Sacraments, they are outward ſigns of an inviſible glory; in Water, and Bread, and Wine, are repreſented and vailed, Chriſt in his perſon, and merrits, in all his holineſſe to the ſoule; he that comes and touches theſe things, and taſts them, may ſee but little in them, more then in ordinary bread, but only God diſcovers a myſtery under theſe ſignes, unto a Saints Faith, makes the ſoule ſee Chriſt in his Nature and Merits, and feel him in his Vertue. So in preaching the high and unexpreſſible love of God is to be let forth in the words of a Miniſter; which words can never expreſſe what that love is.

And ſoules may hear a thouſand of the moſt Goſpel-Sermons that can be preach'd, and yet underſtand nothing of Divine Truth, only there is a *myſtery* vailed in theſe words; *and the great and inward things of God are manifeſted thorough theſe words*: And this is one great reſpect wherein the godlineſs is call'd a *myſtery*, becauſe its own Nature is not to be expreſt, though it be repreſented by outward things.

4. It

It is a *myſtery*, becauſe, of the fulneſſe, and vaſtneſſe, and variety of its manifeſtations; it is ſo ful, as that it cannot be diſcovered at once; it is ſo vaſt, as that it cannot be lookt into but by degrees; the variety of its actings are ſo many, as that you have it open'd in ſeverall parcels. As ſome locks that you have ſeen, have ſo many ſeveral wards and turnings in them, that though they be in one peece, yet you muſt have divers keys, and divers turnings to open it; as ſeverall artificiall Boxes, folded in one another; ſo is the *myſtery* of the Goſpell, though one intire peece of Heavenly light, yet interwoven with ſuch varietie of turuings, and ſpreading it ſelfe abroad into ſo vaſt a circumferance, that you cannot ſee but a little of its glory, as yon can ſee no more of the Sun, then in your owne Horizon. So ſaith the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 1. The *Righteouſneſſe of God, is revealed from Faith to Faith.* And in the *Revelations*; *The Book of the Lambe had ſeven Seales.*

Take godlineſſe in its ſelfe, and the whole bulk of it, and it is ſo large, as it reacheth from everlaſting to everlaſting; and all along it is manifeſted in a multitude of new expreſſions and demonſtrations.

Take it in all the particulars of it, and every one is a diſtinct *myſtery*, and ſo large, that there

there is not any one part of it fully diſcovered, or to be compleatly known; every other knowledge may be ſoon attained unto, men have come to a great perfection in it; but all our life is but a learning of this art, none profeſs to be Maſters of it, all are Scholars, and the more they learne, they wonder the more at their own ignorance, there is ſo much behind. It is delivered in ſhort ſentences, that all the wits in the world have been racking their heads, but to beat out knowledge of it. All the former ages have had worke enough for all their parts too, and to ſerve but their age, out of the very letters in which this *myſtery* is written; and yet the after ages wonder that they have known no more, and could dig no more glory out of this one Myne. The very out-ſide, and Characters of the Goſpel, have tortur'd the ſtrongeſt heads from age to age, but to underſtand the meaning of it. And how much doe Saints find in the Goſpell, in this age, as if there were a new manifeſtation of God unto the world: Yea, and the ages to come ſhall know more of this *myſtery* then we have.

The Apoſtle. *Epheſ.* 2. 7. Hath an expreſſion in the *Epheſians*, which is obſervable, *viz.* That in the Ages to come he might ſhew forth the exceeding riches of his grace, ὑπερ-

βάλ-

βαλλοντα πλούτου τῆς χαρίτος. The ſuperabundant riches of grace, that is but one part of this *myſtery*, yet it is in an extream exceſſe; Why had not God revealed grace enough in the former ages; and in that preſent age, in calling in the *Gentiles*, in converting ſo many thouſands at once; what a deal of that grace had *Paul* himſelfe. 1 *Tim.* 1. 14. He ſaith, that grace did ſuperabound to him, before he writ to the *Epheſians*, and is there any more grace to be revealed? Oh, yes; herein lies the *myſtery* of grace, that he hath reſerved exceeding riches of grace, for the ages to come, grace that never ſaw light before, as if he had yet a fuller magazine of riches of grace for the latter ages, and unto this day, we ſee grace running over all all bounds on the Creatures. And we may ſay the like of every part of godlineſſe; It is ſuch a vaſt body of light and glory, that it can be ſeen by no eye in the world at once. God hath laid out every part in a diſtinct excellency: As when you goe to buy curious things at the *Exchange*, there are ſo may varieties, that you muſt have one box opened, then another, and by degrees ſee all their commodities: Therefore you have it ſaid of the manifeſtations of God in the old Teſtament. 1 *Heb.* 1. πολυμέρως πολύτρωπος. God manifeſted in his glory, by peece-meale,

meale, and in divers wayes and adminiſtrations, becauſe of the abundance of glory in it; ſo not in the new Teſtament, theſe truths are ſet forth in divers adminiſtrations, divers operations, and multitude of gifts; ſome have one gifts, ſome another, and yet all but opening one and the ſame *myſtery*, in various and ſeverall waies; the whole variety of diſpenſations is called by the Apoſtle *Peter*, 1 *Pet.* 4. 10. The manifold wiſdome of *God*, or the wiſdome of *God* variouſly manifeſted, one and the ſame wiſdome acted in ſeverall glories (ποικίλης.) And thus godlineſſe is a *myſtery* indeed, which hath ſuch manifold wiſdome in it, ſo highly, and diverſly, and ſucceſsively acted.

Fifthly, A myſtery is put to expreſs the depth of knowledge, the profoundneſſe, of any Science; it is knowledge unknown as it were unto the moſt, that which few know, or can dive into. It is not the ſcum or froth of wit, but the height and depth of wiſdome; to be known in myſteries is to be a man of learning and knowledge, as we ſay: Thus is godlineſſe a myſtery, that it hath the bottome and depth of all counſell and wiſdome in it; in the contrivance of godlineſſe God acted his utmoſt and eternall wiſdome, and there you have the bottome of his heart turned up;

there

theſe things that lay deep in the boundleſſe ſea of eternity are brought in ſight unto our eyes; the Apoſtles expreſsion of it is this, he brought life and immortality to light, through the Goſpel. As if ſome man of rare parts ſhould bring to knowledge ſome ſecret and ſtrange contrived plot of great conſequence into a ſtate; why by the Goſpell which is the ſyſteme of godlineſſe, light, and immortality, the greateſt things of moſt infinite concernment are brought to light; you read in the *Corinthians* of the deepe things of God which the Spirit reveales, 1 *Cor.* 2. (τὰ βάθη τοῦ θεοῦ) theſe deep things are nothing elſe but this myſtery of godlineſſe, which come out of the depth of wiſdome, and power, and love unto our ſoules.

In *Rom.* 11. the Apoſtle ſpeaking but of one part of this myſtery in the rejection of the Jews, cries out in admiration, (Ὦ βάθος) Oh the depth both of the wiſdome and knowledge of God, *&c.* godlineſſe is no ſhallow thing, an outſide of knowledge, but the very depth of wiſdome and knowledge, the word ſignifies a gulph that hath no bottome at all.

There is not a part of godlineſſe but you muſt go back unto eternity to find its beginning, it containes the weightieſt and important things of immortality and glory; the Elephant may ſwim in theſe ſtreames, the

ſoule

ſoule may ſoone be drowned in wading into theſe waters, loſe his feet, and have the billows of immortality and unſearchable wiſdome overflow him; godlineſſe containes things which reaſon cannot reach, which wit cannot expreſſe, which the vaſteſt underſtanding cannot containe. Senſe is ſwallowed up, reaſon is non-pluſt while it deales with thoſe myſteries; the Apoſtle profeſſeth that they are ſo deep that none but the bleſſed ſpirit, who knows all things, can reveale them; yea, and he ſaith, *that he ſearcheth the deep things*, &c. As if they were ſo deep that the Spirit it ſelfe muſt ſearch into them before he can know them; not but the Spirit knows all things, but to expreſſe unto us what myſterious things are in godlineſſe.

Babylon in the *Revelations* is called a myſtery, becauſe of the depth of deceit and policy whereby ſhe ſtands, *Rev.* 10. 7. In a word, whatever is darke in it ſelfe, or delivered in hidden and unuſuall termes, that is called a myſtery, whatever cannot be known but meerly by Revelation, *Rom.* 16. 25. Thus is the Goſpell, and all Religion purely to be diſcovered by the revelation of the ſpirit of God; thus much of what the Word in its uſe imports: I muſt apply this ere I go farther.

Uſe 1. It may ſerve as a reaſon to informe us,

us, why no more are acquainted with the Goſpell, it is a myſtery; the moſt of men are ignorant of the ordinary, and the common principles of nature: there are but a few of ſtrong apprehenſions that can fathome them, but the things of Religion are myſteries far above the reach of nature; no marvell if the wiſe men, and the noble men of the world are ſo fooliſh in theſe things; for the Apoſtle gives the reaſon, *We ſpeake the wiſdome of God in a myſtery*, 1 *Cor.* 2. 7. the wiſdome of God is made known in the Goſpell, and in a myſtery; what is that? why it is vailed in outward, and poore, and low expreſſions, which all their parts cannot ſee into.

The Apoſtle profeſſeth, that no naturall man can reach the meaning of them, 1 *Cor.* 2. 14. All the things of Chriſt they are paradoxes, ſtrange things to men of great judgements in the world; and the reaſon is, becauſe they are ſpiritually to be diſcerned: (πνευματικὸς ἀνακρίνεται) this is a great objection againſt many things of truth, ſuch great men and wiſe men can ſee no reaſon for it; it is no wonder, for they are myſteries: Thoſe which will find out this riddle muſt plow with another Heifer than ſenſe and reaſon, and naturall endowments. God hath ſo ordered that he hath choſen the fooliſh things of the world,

κατασχύνη) to confound the wiſe things of the world. 1 *Cor.* 1. 27.

Therefore the Goſpell is called the wiſdome of God, as oppoſite to the wiſdome of men; And the Apoſtle ſaith poſitively, that it was wiſdome in ſuch a myſtery that none of the Princes of this world knew; Nay, the Spirit jeeres all the learned of the world in this very thing, becauſe of their groſſe ignorance, (ποῦ σόφος? ποῦ γραμματεύς?) *Where is the Scribe? Where is the wiſe? Where is the diſputer? hath not God made fooliſh the wiſdom of the world?* 1 *Cor.* 1. 20. (ποῦ συζητητὴς) Chriſt he bleſſeth his Father for this, that he had hid theſe things from wiſe and prudent, and revealed them unto babes, *Mat.* 11.

There is a twofold knowledge of Religon: A hiſtoricall, or notionall, and ſpirituall, and myſticall; the firſt, theſe which are moſt wiſe may come unto the moſt exact knowledge of, as far as letters and words will expreſſe things, as much as outward Characters can expreſſe inward life; and they may know the true ſence and meaning of things in the Goſpel, according to what either the hiſtory, or the tenor of ſuch words will import, and have as reall meaning of the words as the beſt of Saints may have: But this is (*hærere in cortice*) to ſtick at the rind, they can never ſpiritually ſee into that glorious

glorious myſtery which God intends by theſe expreſſions.

But this I would have all to note, though the myſtery is more than can be expreſt in word, and there is a further glory hidden than is expreſt in any ſentences divine, yet there is no myſtery contrary to the very ſenſe and meaning of the poſitive words of ſcripture.

Ob. So that if any aske how far the light of humane reaſon can go in the finding out theſe great myſteries?

Sol. I anſwer, No further than what the ſenſe of words will beare, and the deductions, and concluſions from thence, (which yet may be as true for the notion as any knowledge which enlightned ſouls have) but into the intimate glory and nature of the things themſelves, and Gods deſigne of love and glory in them, all the light of nature cannot ſee, for they are ſpirituall things, though cloathed with earthly formes, and expreſſing themſelves by earthly mediums, and they are to be judged in their owne nature, and their own light. (Πνευματικοῖς πνεύματα συγκρίνοντες) judging ſpirituall things by ſpirituall, as the ſun muſt be tried by its own light, not, by the ſtars or a candle; for example, ſuppoſe a mans ſoule be affected with joy or griefe, or taken up with apprehenſions of ſome high nature, and it

breakes forth in words or writing to expreſſe this, any man which hath reaſon can tell what the words mean, and ſo gives judgement of his workings: But to ſee intimately how that ſoule works, how the ſpirits flow up and downe in the workings of the ſoule on thoſe apprehenſions, none can imagine but one that is poſſeſt with the very ſame paſsion, and can go as it were purely into ſuch a ſoule; ſo may I ſay of all the myſtery of the Goſpell, the ſound of words, the ſenſe of things which they hold forth, nature may ſee, reaſon may apprehend: But to behold the ſpirituall glory and beauty of God in theſe above all things elſe, none but the ſpirituall man, one who hath his heart in the boſome of thoſe glories, can ſee. Therefore the Apoſtle prayes for the *Epheſians*, *Eph.* 1. 17, 18. That they might have the *S*pirit of wiſdome and revealation, in the knowledge of him, the eyes of their underſtanding being enlightned, they might know, *&c.*

Uſe 2. What cauſe haſt thou to bleſſe *G*od for ever, who haſt any thing of this *myſtery* made known to thee? It was hid from ages and generations of men, and hath *G*od revealed it in any meaſure to thy poor ſoule; Oh what a deale of wonder ſhould it raiſe in thy heart. It is as a great *myſtery*, to reveal this in thee, as the things themſelves doe hold forth.

forth. The Apoſtle to the *Coloſſians*, magnifies the diſpenſation of it, 1 *Col.* 26, 27. And he cals it the riches of the glory of the *myſterie*, which is, Chriſt in you. This *myſtery* holds forth the unſearchable riches of Chriſt to the poore ſoule: Oh, men doe not know what a mercy it is, to have a revelation of this glorious Chriſt, in ſuch a *myſtery*, in their owne ſoules; that muſt needs be a glorious mercy, which Chriſt doth ſo heartily thanke his Father for, *Mat.* 11.

There is not ſuch an expreſſion in all the Scripture againe, where Chriſt doth ſo expreſſely thanke his Father, as for the revelation of theſe great things to poore ſoules.

God might have ſhut up thee in blindneſs with the world, given thee only parts and gifts in the world, heightned thy underſtanding, to have contemplated the ſecrets of Nature, and it had born a great mercy, or at moſt might have inlightned thy reaſon, to have taken in the outward notion of the Goſpell: But hath he revealed Chriſt in thee, let thee ſee into the wonders of glory, which no tongue can expreſſe, and given thee the light of his Glory in thy heart? Oh, how ſhould thy ſoule be raviſhed with the riches of God's love to thee?

3. *Uſe.* If Religion be a *myſtery*, how

ſhould we wait on God for the manifeſtation of every truth of it: when we come to heare the Goſpell, we ſhould come as to myſteries, lay downe our owne carnall reaſon and unbeliefe, and look for God to teach us, and to reveale his owne glory in us.

There is a twofold vaile muſt be taken away, the one from our eyes, and the other from the things themſelves.

1. God muſt open divine truths to us in their owne Nature; there is a vaile that lies on them, *viz.* the darkneſſe of the expreſſion of them; nay, the reſplendentneſſe and exceeding glory of truth in its ſelfe, is as a vaile before it, as the glory of the Sun is as a vaile unto it, that we cannot look ſtedfaſtly on it to behold its Nature. Now, God muſt remove all vailes from godlineſſe, and make its glory taking unto us, and not only ſo: But

2. The vaile muſt be taken off from our eyes; though theſe things were never ſo lightſome, yet if we are blind, it is all one to us: light and darkeneſſe is at one with a blind man. The Apoſtle ſaith of the Jewes, that when *Moſes* was read, there was a vaile on his face; they could not ſee thorough theſe outward ſhadowes, the living ſubſtance, Jeſus Chriſt; but the reaſon was, becauſe the vaile was on their hearts. But when the vaile is taken off,

then

then we behold with open face, the glory of God, as in a glaſſe. 2 Cor. 3. ult.

Men ſtrive to excell in knowledge in the world, to dive into things that are not common, which others underſtand not. Oh Brethren, here is knowledge indeed, to comprehend this *myſtery* of godlineſſe.

1. In the knowing this a man comes to be privy to all God's eternall plots and deſignes of love and grace unto the world.

2. Soules which behold this *myſtery*, they ſee their own perſons, and happineſs wrapped up in it; for it is a *myſtery* for us, and in us.

3. In knowing this, a ſoule is able to reconcile all contradictions, both in himſelfe and the world, for they all have their reaſon here, which in Nature are abſurdities.

4. There is no way to take thy heart or worke on thy ſoule by any truth, but as thou as thou ſeeſt in the hidden and myſterious excellency of it; all outward apprehenſions of divine things will goe no farther then the outward man.

SERMON III.

1 Tim. 3. 16.

God manifeſted in the fleſh, &c.

I Am now come to theſe particulars, wherein the Apoſtle layes down the greatneſſe of the *Myſtery of godlineſſe*; he might well elevate his voice, and accent his words when he was to ſpeak of ſuch deep things; to call it a *great Myſtery*. Godlineſſe in generall is a *myſtery*, and every thing contained in it, grace and the actings of ſo many myſteries. But here indeed lyes the *greatneſſe of the myſtery*, that is paſſing all knowledge, that God is manifeſted in the fleſh, juſtified in the ſpirit.

So that the Apoſtle ſummes up all the *myſtery* of godlineſſe in theſe ſix particulars.

Before I come to handle each diſtinctly, know in generall, that all that is ſpoken of here in

in this myſterious enumeration of particulars, it is ſpoken of, in reference to Jeſus Chriſt: he is the ſumme and ſubject of it. For *God manifeſted in the fleſh*, was no other then Chriſt, *who was alſo juſtified in the ſpirit, and who is Preached unto the Gentiles, and who is beleeved on in the World*, &c. They all are ſo many ſeverall openings of Chriſt according to the ſeverall waies he may be apprehended,

Chriſt is the *myſtery* wrapt up in all the myſteries of the Goſpell; he comprehends all the circumference of godlineſſe; he is the ſcope of all the Scriptures, the Pearle hid in the large Field of God's word. Every line is drawn to him, as the centre, all things and perſons in the old world were types of him, all the Prophets propheſied of him, all the New Teſtament ſpeaks of him, all the Saints are joyn'd to him, all Gods love runs thorough him, all graces and gifts flow from him, the whole eye of God is upon him, his great deſignes in Heaven and Earth meet in him; as man is an Epitome of the whole world, ſo is Chriſt of all religion. *Eph.* 1.10. There is an ἀνακεφάλευσις, a ſumming up of all things in Heaven and Earth, in Jeſus Chrſt. If you look on the Creation, the world was made by Chriſt, *Col.* 1. 15, 16. 17. on evidences, all things ſubſiſt in Chriſt, have their being and well being in him:

him: If you eye what is the end of all things, why it is Chriſt; all things, made for him: Look again how all things are redeemed, why, God was in Chriſt, reconciling the world, 2 *Cor.* 6. Will you know where to finde God? why, he is in Chriſt. Will you know what is Heaven? it is to be with Chriſt; *Phil.* 1. Whence comes the ſpirit but from Chriſt. what doth the ſpirit do in the World? He ſhall glorifie Chriſt, for he ſhall take of mine, *Joh.* 16. What is the ſubject of the Old and New Teſtament, but a Chriſt to come, and come? What is the end of preaching, but to bring men to Chriſt? What uſe of ordinances, but to ſet forth Chriſt? Chriſt is the great center between Heaven and Earth, God, Angels, Men, and all creatures meet in him, and are all vertually in him. What is in the *Saints*, but Chriſt? What doe the Saints love and beleeve in, but Chriſt? He is the fulneſſe of him that fils all in all. *Epheſ.* 1 *ult.*

Uſe. Let all creatures ſtand and gaze, and wonder and admire at Jeſus Chriſt, he is the great wonder of knowledge. Oh, how ſhould all our hearts be contracted in the beholding Jeſus Chriſt? What delight ſhould ſoules take in the ſtudying of this Chriſt? Saints turne your eyes on the Lord, and ſee his glory. Whatever you know in the world, labour to know

know him: He is the *myſtery* of all the glory of God. When thou haſt ſought over al the world, all the Goſpell, thou ſhalt find God laying out nothing but Chriſt, all relations are founded in Chriſt, all excellencies are gathered up in him, as beames in the Sun. Come poor ſoul, whoſe eyes run to and fro the world to find comforts and happineſſe, caſt thy eye back, and ſee Heaven and Earth in one, and look what ever thy vaſt thoughts can fancie, not only to be in this world, but in the world to come; or if thou canſt imagine more variety, ſee that, and infinitely more ſhining forth from the perſon of the Lord Jeſus. Miniſters muſt cry up Chriſt; Saints muſt adore him, Angels muſt ſtand amazed at him, all creatures muſt vaile all the r glory to him: Here is an object of love, a compendium of all glories; here is one for a heart to be taken with, that is made of nothing but of ſeverall *myſteries* of glory.

Well might the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor* 2. 2. *Phil.* 3. deſire to know nothing but Jeſus Chriſt; to account all things but dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt, he knew all things in him.

Oh what mad men are ſinners, which re ect this Chriſt, they ſlight all at once; nothing is ever to be had without Chriſt, nothing but in Chriſt. Why ſtand you gazing on the toyes

of

of this world, when ſuch a Chriſt is offered you in the Goſpell? Can the world die for you? can the world bring God to you? can the world advance you to Heaven?

Oh, let all cry out, none but Chriſt, ſtudy nothing but Chriſt, goe to nothing but Chriſt, admire nothing but Chriſt; as he is the ſumme and ſubſtance of all things, ſo let him be the full and compleat ſubject of your Faith and Love, and Joyes and Delights; the more you ſee him, the more your hearts will be loſt in love to him; you may ſee every day new *myſteries* of Love and Beauty in Jeſus Chriſt, new depths of wiſdome and fulneſſe Oh how could the Apoſtle chooſe when he thought of Chriſt, but break out as he did: Let them be *Anathema Maranatha*, that love not the Lord Jeſus· Curſed for ever be thoſe ſoules, that cannot love ſuch a Chriſt; there can be no curſe too dreadfull.

But ſo much only in the generall, which yet is worth your obſervation.

The particulars in themſelves are ſo glorious, as they dazle my eyes; ſomething might be ſaid of them, but the depth and glory of them, can never be expreſt.

To begin with the firſt.

God manifeſt in the fleſh.

This is the bottome of all the *myſteries* in the

the Goſpell; every word ſpeaks Paradoxes, God manifeſted is wonderfull, for no man ever ſaw God at any time; But *God manifeſted in fleſh*, that is a contradiction; it is more abſurd to nature, then to ſay, a ſpirit is fleſh: God hath gone beyond us exceedingly in the work of our own ſalvation; yet becauſe that the thing is made known, we muſt pry into the *myſtery* of it, and of all the *myſteries* in the Goſpell, this is the firſt and greateſt, the foundation of all the reſt. In the opening of it, we muſt obſerve;

1. What is meant by *God*
2. What by *God manifeſted.*
3. What by *fleſh*, and the *manifeſtation in fleſh.*
4. How God hath manifeſted himſelfe *in fleſh.*
5. The eminency of this *manifeſtation* above all other.
6. The *myſtery* of all this.

For the firſt: By God, is not meant God eſſentially, the very God-head indefinitely, but God perſonally in ſuch a perſon; though the whole god-head be included, yet it is manifeſted but in one Perſon; to wit, the ſecond Perſon Jeſus Chriſt, becauſe all actions are done

done by Perſons, not by Natures : Therefore, this is a manifeſtation of God in his owne Son. God's eſſence was never manifeſted, no man ever ſaw God, only, the onely begotten Son.

He that came out of his boſome to reveale him : And this is none other, but an exact deſcription of Chriſt, which is, *God manifeſt in the fleſh.*

Now ſecondly; by God is not barely meant an apparition of *God in fleſh*, which he meant to lay downe againe upon an occaſion ; but as the word ſignifies paſſively, *conſpicuus factus eſt in carne*, is made known and cleer to us *in fleſh*. This manifeſtation notes not a tranſient ſhew of God to us, but a cleer and conſtant demonſtration of God, and the only great and glorious firſt way of the manifeſting God unto us, as the word ſignifies, a making of a thing to ſhine as the Sun to our eyes. that convinceth every man, of what he ſeeth : And this not only as a glimpſe of God, which was very glorious, and ſo away ; but as the cleereſt and richeſt way of diſcovery, that ever was, or ſhould be in this world.

But thirdly, What this fleſh ſhould be is a *myſtery*. Fleſh is taken ſeverall wayes in Scripture.

Firſt, For ſinne, and its ſinfull Nature we have.

See

See the luſts of the fleſh, that cannot be here meant, God hath made no appearance of himſelfe in ſin.

Secondly, Fleſh taken for our humane Nature.

All fleſh have corrupted their waies; *Gen.* 6. That is, all men, their Natures are defiled. So *Rom.* 7. in my fleſh, dwels no good thing, that is, in my Nature, either in ſoule or body, or both.

Thirdly, Fleſh is commonly taken for the weakneſſe and infirmities of that Nature; *All fleſh is graſſe, and the glory of it as the flower.* 1 *Pet.* 1.

And the Holy Ghoſt ſpeaking of the *Ægyptian* Horſes, tels you, that they are fleſh and not ſpirit, it is weak and not ſtrong. So that,

Fourthly, How hath God *manifeſted* himſelfe in *fleſh*, not in the firſt ſence, but the two latter, in appearing in our Nature, in taking our infirmities and weakneſſe, ſutable unto that Nature, (ſin ſtill excepted.) And what is here called the manifeſtation of God in fleſh, is in other Scriptures parallell explain'd. As he is ſaid to be *Immanuel*, *God with us.* *Mat.* 2. How can that be, but only becauſe of being in the ſame common Nature with us. It is ſaid, *the word was made fleſh*, and dwelt among

among us. 1 *John* 14. it is the ſame phraſe with this; *for the word was God. v.* 1. And yet it was made fleſh, not that there was any tranſmutation of God into fleſh, that was blaſphemy, but only by reaſon of the union of fleſh to him who was God.

This is farther expreſt in the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews Heb.* 2. 16. He took not on him the Nature of Angels, but the ſeed of *Abraham.* (ἐπιλαμβάνεται) He aſſumed not to himſelfe; that is, God did not manifeſt, himſelfe, or appeared in any Angelicall Nature, but in the Nature of men, and was made in all things like unto us, ſin only excepted.

There is another clear place, *Phil.* 2. 6, 7, 8. Which the Apoſtle urgeth about the manner of this diſcovery, that Chriſt, though he were in the forme of God, and thought it no robbery (that is, did God no wrong to ſay he was equall with him) yet aſſumed or took on him, or appeared in the forme or the likeneſſe of a ſervant, it is our Nature which was in ſubjection and ſervitude unto God.

So that now this manifeſtation of God in fleſh, is no other then God in the ſecond perſon, aſſuming to himſelfe the humane Nature, and ſo revealing himſelf to men, ſutably to their condition; and this is Chriſt. This manifeſtation is an effect of Gods aſſumption of

of our Nature; ſo that this expreſſion literally imports:

1. The aſſuming of our Nature, and the union with God; God taking up us to himſelfe as one, in our common Nature.

The full diſcovery of God to us, in our owne Nature, God acting forth his glory in our owne fleſh.

And all this is ſtill but to denote out Chriſt, who is the perſon ſet forth in the Goſpell, who was with *God*, and was God, and dwelt among us, as the Apoſtle ſaith that is, took up his Tabernacle of fleſh in our Nature, thereby to converſe with us: Yet many would faine wreſt this Scripture from the perſon of Chriſt; for ſome of the old Interpreters, as *Beza* obſerves; leave out (θεὸς) and put in only (ὅ) *quod manifeſtè eſt*) omit God, and put in which *myſtery* manifeſted in fleſh, thereby to take off the glory of Chriſts as God. *Eraſm.* by fleſh, here he underſtands the whole world, and by manifeſtation the Goſpell intimating that this is the *myſtery*, that God ſhould be manifeſted to the world, but that is contrary unto this place, for he afterwards ſpeaks of the Preaching of it to the *Gentiles*, that is, to the whole world.

It is doubtleſſe, meant of God as in our Nature, making up the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt;

and this will yet appeare if you conſider the

4. Thing; that this was the greateſt manifeſtation of God, that ever was; God was manifeſted in nothing like this; for look firſt over the manifeſtation of God in the firſt creation, there was but only ſome outſide of God's glory diſcovered, nothing of Gods Nature: The whole world never ſaw what God was, truly by that: Indeed the Apoſtle ſaith, *Rom* 1. That the inviſible things of God, were knowne by the things that are made, even God's eternall power and wiſdome; but theſe were manifeſted in an ordinary and common way; as a Picture ſhewes the art of the Painter, but yet you may not know his perſon. But in this, God himſelfe is manifeſted; for firſt, here is not only ſo much of God manifeſted, as humane nature it ſelfe could demonſtrate, for then it had been a poor manifeſtation of God, who can ſee God, in ſeeing all the men in the world, or in all the Saints in the world, in their fleſh; but it ſets out a ſpeciall way of aſſumption of our Nature unto the perſon of Chriſt, who was God making theſe two natures, but one perſon.

2. This manifeſtation was in union of fleſh in the neereſt way to God himſelfe; not as a lanthorne to hold the light only of God's glory; but as one intire perſon, to repreſent what

what God is in himſelfe; all the whole world was never united to God before, though God did manifeſt ſome thing to our Nature, as to *Adam*, yet God did never unite any creature to himſelfe before, and though God was manifeſt to fleſh, yet never in fleſh before; that is the great *myſtery*. God is manifeſt to his Saints, but he is not manifeſted in the fleſh or in the Nature of any but Jeſus Chriſt. This is ſo great a manifeſtation, as that God is become man, as it were by reaſon of the union of their Natures; *the word was made fleſh, and dwelt among us*; as if God had relinquished his own Name and Nature, and loſt himſelfe in our Nature; he was found in the forme of a ſervant. Now let us but thinke what a manifeſtation of God this muſt be, which is God not only letting forth himſelfe in a way of communication, but God in union with the ſame Nature which we are in: Therefore Chriſt is called the expreſſe image of the perſon of the Father, not an image as he was the ſecond perſon meerly; for ſo he was not the mage, but God himſelfe; but an image, beauſe in that union of our Nature with God, here was the exacteſt diſcovery of God himſelf, as poſſible could be to the creature. 2 *Cor.* 3. *ult.* Therefore Chriſt is called a glaſſe, wherein man may with open face, *behold the bright lory of God*, But

6. How great muſt this *myſtery* needs be; God manifeſted in the fleſh? how is that poſſible? fleſh hides God, he is of a ſpiritual Nature; it is as much as to ſay the Sun manifeſted in a cloud, or light manifeſt in darkneſſe; I confeſſe, my heart could rather ſtand and admire, then ſpeak any thing more. What ever is a medium of conveyance of any thing in Nature, muſt be proportion'd unto the thing it diſcovers; as the aire, not a mud wall conveys the light of the Sun to us; fleſh and God; what proportion is there between them; let fleſh be but thought, God muſt needs be forgotten, for they are at an infinite diſtance, yea, contrary; yet this is the myſtery.

1. God not only ſetting out himſelfe thorough fleſh in a tranſient way, ſhining through it, but being made fleſh, being one with fleſh.

2. Not in innocent Nature, but in the likeneſſe of ſinfull Nature, *Rom* 8. 3. To manifeſt himſelfe in the fleſh of Rebels and Traytours, and honour that fleſh which had ſo ſinned, and was ſo polluted: this is a *myſtery*.

3. To act in this Nature in the world, to dye, and be deſpiſed, and ſuffer the utmoſt contradiction of ſinners, who is able to fathom the depth of this *myſtery*? As one ſaith of the Trinity, they were like three ſifters, which ſpun

ſpun one piece of a garment, and only one weares it; ſo had all theſe three an hand in the making of this Nature, but only Chriſt the ſecond Perſon weares it, and all their glory is laid out in it; how one Perſon could be God and man; how God ſhould be put to death in our Nature, to reconcile us to himſelfe, fleſh filled with the fulneſſe of God, is beyond the apprehenſion of men and Angels to declare. But we may tell that it is ſo, and admire it as we ſpeake. Bleſſedneſſe to be made a curſe, Heaven let downe into Hell, the God of the world ſhutting himſelfe up, as it were in a body, the inviſible God made viſible to ſenſe; he which hath all things in Heaven and Earth at his command, not have a houſe in the world, glory it ſelfe of no comelineſſe: What ſhall I ſay, all things become nothing, making it ſelfe of no reputation? And a thouſand more ſuch paradoxes are wrapt up in this one expreſſion. Oh how great a depth is in this glorious deſign of God; he was manifeſted to *Adam*, to *Moſes*, and many others; but here was his utmoſt manifeſtation in our fleſh.

For the nature of this manifeſtation, know:

1. It is not a bare manifeſtation of ſome attributes of God, but it is a manifeſtation of God in his own nature; the fulneſſe of the

God-head dwelt in Chriſt bodily or really, *Col.* 2. Not that God is circumſcribed in our Nature, but that the God-head it ſelfe is united to Chriſts body, and dwels in it, fils it, and abides upon him.

2. Neither is it a manifeſtation of God abſolutely, as in himſelfe; but as in order to reconciliation and ſalvation of ſouls. For God might have been manifeſted elſe in our fleſh to have conſumed us: But as the Apoſtle ſaith, *God was in Chriſt, reconciling the World to himſelfe.* That is, God was in Chriſts Nature, as a God in order to the reconciling poor ſoules; and this is the great *myſtery.* God was offended by our Nature, and God takes that Nature on himſelfe, to reconcile us to himſelfe, by himſelfe. God himſelfe will pay the price, out of his own glory, for our offences only aſſumes our Nature, (as if it ſhould be thought to act it out for us) and joynes it to his ſonne, and cals that Chriſt, and this is the Goſpell notion of Chriſt, God manifeſt in fleſh, in order to the reconciliation of poor ſoules. Thus God muſt ſatisfie himſelfe, and ſave us, himſelfe only takes our Nature to doe it in, and cals it Chriſt a Saviour when it is none other then God himſelfe in our Nature, tranſacting our peace.

This *manifeſtation* is a peculiar one. For

Firſt,

Firſt, *God* was never manifeſted as one with fleſh before; he was not one with *Adam's* Nature, or with any of the firſt Creation; but this is a manifeſtation of ownneſſe.

Secondly, God never manifeſted himſelf in his *God*-head before, in ſuch a manner: many of his glorious attributes were ſeen and diſcovered, as his wiſdome, power; But no man ſaw God at any time, the only begotten *Sonne* revealed him, and the fulneſſe of the God-head dwelt in no Nature bodily, but in our Nature which Chriſt had,

Thirdly, *God* never manifeſted himſelfe in ſuch a ſtraine of love, as in our fleſh; it was the higheſt manifeſtation of Love, that ever was, that God loved our very Nature ſo, as to be one with us; herein was his love manifeſted, and commended indeed, that he would come down in our Nature to us. And as one ſaid well, *God* did ſo love the very Nature of his Elect, that though he had them not all with him in Heaven for the preſent, yet he muſt have their picture, of their own Nature in his Sonne, to ſee them in, and love them.

1. *Uſe.* Then here is ſtill ground of new admiration and wonder to ſoules; God is come downe, and hath left as it were his owne habitation, to dwell among the ſonnes of men: This is the firſt and great *myſtery* of the

Goſpel. God out of infinite goodneſs, would make a revelation of himſelfe to the world; to do it in his pure glory, would conſume all fleſh, eſpecially ſeeing it was to be a manifeſtation unto ſinners; but he cloaths himſelf with fleſh, with our own Nature, and ſo appears to us; as an infinite love and ſweetneſs; there be many great deſignes in this one.

1. By this he takes away the diſtance between his majeſty and us, for he is now become *Immanuel*, *God* with us. The thoughts of *God* would have been ſufficient terror; we could never have come nigh *God*, for we were infinitely below him. But now, Gods taking up our Nature as one with himſelf, and appearing as in our own form and likeneſs, hath broken down the wall of partition in Nature, as that which takes away the dreadful nature of Gods glory, yet reflects the reall ſweetneſſe of it to us.

2. By this, God would indeare and ſweeten himſelfe to his poor creature, and fit a way of ſweet converſe with us; if God had manifeſted himſelfe in his own naked glory, ſtill while we are ſinners, we ſhould not only be daz'led, but ſhrunk up to nothing; to ſee the Sun as it ſhines in its own luſtre, would ſpoile the ſight of the ſtrongeſt eye.

But to look upon it, as in an eclipſe in wat r, or

or thorough a glaſſe, that is not offenſive; to conſider God in himſelfe, is to have our ſoules ſwallowed up, but to look on God in our nature, brings down his glory to our eye, and woes us to behold it.

3. By this God hath raiſed up a ſtatue and viſible monument of his own infinite love to his Elect for ever: For rather then they ſhall want a ſutable diſcovery of himſelfe, he will come and take up their owne nature, and be called after their names, as if he would be any thing to ſhew his love. This is the fulleſt viſible demonſtration of God's love that ever was: It was more for God to take our nature, then ſimply to ſave us, more then let out a bare mercy, and grace in it ſelfe. For a King to ſave a murtherer from the Gallowes by his owne prerogative, and diſpence with the Law, is not ſuch an act of love and mercy, as to take the murtherers clothes, and weare them as his richeſt livery, and give as a mark of honour, to his owne Sonne, and to make an honourable order of the rags of that garment, as that King did of a Garter. God hath done more in taking our Nature; what love was this, that God will be no more God, as it were ſimply, but take up another Nature, rather then the brightneſſe of his owne glory ſhall undoe us.

4. By this God would ſhew what he means to

to bring us unto ; he took our nature up to himſelfe, as a pattern or type of what he would bring all Saints unto ; God is come down in our likeneſſe, to bring us up into his likeneſſe. Nature was never ſo advanced ; it is the higheſt glory that is poſſible to be put upon nature, it is more then to fill all our ſouls with a fulneſſe of grace ; for our nature is united in a perſonall union with the ſecond perſon, then which there cannot be more glory. What a faire ſtep is now made, for the bringing the perſon up to the injoyment of God.

Oh, let none ſay now, that God is not willing to ſave ſoules who is come down ſo low, as to live among us; ſay not who ſhal go up to Heaven to bring downe God, or downe unto the deeps to fetch him up. God is nigh you, even in your owne fleſh : You may but turne about, and ſee God manifeſted to your owne eyes ; we preach not fancy, when we lay out the riches of Gods glory in love and mercy. But as the *Apoſtle* ſaith, what we have ſeen, and what we have felt and taſted, that we declare unto you, 1 *Joh.* 1. 1, 2, 3. Say not unbelieving ſoule, how ſhall I come nigh God; why God is come tō thee, he dwels in the Tabernacles of men. In a word, God is manifeſted in our fleſh, that our fleſh may be taken up into his fulneſſe.

SERM.

SERMON IV.

1 Tim. 3. 16.

God manifeſted in the fleſh, &c.

I Made an entrance on this the laſt day, but there are new myſteries yet ariſing, and no ſooner doth one diſcovery paſſe but another comes on, this bottomleſſe depth of Gods glory in the Goſpell can be ſounded by none but God himſelfe; we have ſome manifeſtations of it, and that in fleſh, or elſe we had never imagined what thoughts God had towards his poore Creatures; beſides what hath been ſpoken as to the opening of the words, ſtill this muſt be taken in, That it is not *God* in fleſh myſtically, but perſonally: Or elſe thus, It is not meant of God manifeſted in fleſh, that is, in the whole myſticall body of Chriſt, the Saints: But only God aſſuming our nature into the union of Chriſts perſon, and

and this had need to be obſerved, becauſe all theſe places, where it is ſaid, that *it pleaſed the Father that in him all fulneſſe ſhould dwell, Col.* 1. 19. and *that the fulneſſe of the God-head dwelt in him bodily, Col.* 2. and this place is ſpoken of Chriſt myſtically, or in his body, not perſonally, intimating that God dwels in the fleſh of the Saints, as much as in the humane nature of Jeſus Chriſt; and that there is no other diſtinction than of head and members.

Now to cleare up this to you, I ſhall not need to go farther than this verſe.

1. This is ſpoken of a thing that is already done: God is, or was manifeſted in fleſh; now if it were meant of the whole myſtical body of Chriſt, it muſt have been ſaid God will manifeſt himſelfe in fleſh, for all that body is not yet made up, are not capable of any ſuch manifeſtation, thouſands of them being yet unborne.

2. God that is manifeſted in fleſh, is juſtified in ſpirit, and ſeen of Angels, and preached unto the Gentiles, and beleeved on in the world, and received up to glory; now none will be ſo groſſely ignorant as to attribute this to Saints; Saints are not preached to the Gentiles, nor believed on in the world, nor yet all received up to glory.

3. God

3. God as manifeſt in fleſh, did die in that fleſh, was crucified to make atonement for ſin, for this was a manifeſtation in order unto reconciliation; now who will ſay, that the bodies of the Saints did die, and were offered up in ſacrifice, and did make our peace with God, which they muſt be ſaid to do, if the meaning of the phraſe be according to that interpretation.

We had need be wary in the letting out our thoughts on the Scripture, and faſtening interpretation of things, ſeeing ſuch ſtrange conſequences may follow.

And eſpecially take heed of advancing Saints ſo as to leſſen Chriſt; he muſt have the preheminence above Saints and Angels; and know that there is not only a diſtinction between Chriſt and Saints meerly as head and members, but a diſtinction of them in regard of their perſons; for Chriſt is a head, in regard of his perſon, as the husband is the head of his wife, and though they be one body, yet he is a diſtinct perſon, and hath thoſe incommunicable prerogatives that cannot be appropriated either to Saints ſingly, or as his body.

Gods manifeſtation to the fleſh of Saints, is at ſecond hand thorough Chriſt, of his fulneſſe, that is, of that fulneſſe which reſides eminently and diſtinctly in his perſon, they receive grace

for

for grace. Indeed God is ſaid to dwell in us, and we in God ; but how ? not as God dwels in Chriſt, but becauſe he dwels in us by his own nature, and we by union with Chriſt partake of that fulneſſe, according to our meaſure. God dwels in Chriſt immediately, and as a God he dwells in us through Jeſus Chriſt, Chriſt letting out part of that fulneſſe on our hearts. And thus God was pleaſed that in him all fulneſſe ſhould dwell, and by him to reconcile all things to himſelfe, that in all things he might have the preheminence, and that his perſon might be diſtinctly admired above all Creatures.

The difference of Gods manifeſting himſelfe in fleſh, that is, in Chriſts humane nature, and ours, lies in this, that this manifeſtation was as in an ordinance of life and ſalvation, making that perſon which had our nature the great conveyer of eternal peace and comfort through that fleſh ; ſo the Apoſtle, *Col.* 1. 22. In the body of his fleſh, through death, he is to preſent us blameleſſe and ſpotleſſe to his Father ; wherefore ſaith the Apoſtle againe, *Heb.* 2. 17. It became him in all things to be made like his brethren, that he might be a merciſull high Prieſt, &c. that is, that he might be fit to convey life and ſalvation to poore ſoules

But

But Gods manifeſtation in the fleſh, or perſons of the Saints, is as into ſeverall Ciſternes which lye under the fountaine to receive their proportion: God manifeſting himſelfe in Chriſts fleſh is as of a fulneſſe to fill all; but in the perſon of the Saints it is but of ſeverall degrees and meaſures in order to a fulneſſe; that we may come to the fulneſſe of the meaſure; God hath manifeſted himſelfe in our nature, that by that he might at length fill all our perſons; Thus is our nature joyned to the God-head, to be as a great pipe ſet at the mouth of ſome full ſpring, that through that God might run out his love and glory by degrees on our heart; firſt Chriſt receives it at once, and then thorough his Spirit diſcovers it in us.

In a word, Gods manifeſtation in Chriſts fleſh was as a Saviour, a Redeemer, a Head, yea, as the Author of eternall Salvation to us. And this is the myſterie of myſteries, he which reads this may very well ceaſe to wonder at any thing elſe.

This is the foundation of all Gods other actings to us, the pole on which they all turne, all the diſcoveries of God are wrapt up in this one; this unlocks Gods own Cabinet wherein all his deſignes lye; Election, Redemption, Glorification, all is wrapt up in this, and made cleare

cleare when we underſtand this one expreſſion; God manifeſted in fleſh, it is the being of light, and immortality to light, at once it opens heaven and earth.

1. This is the foundation of our union with God and Sonſhip; it is from hence that God is one with our nature, God is manifeſted as a Father in our own fleſh; we are Sons, becauſe Chriſt is, he was really and naturally the *Son*, and we through him receive the adoption of ſons; *For he which ſanctifieth and they which are ſanctified are all one, therefore he is not aſhamed to call them brethren, Heb.* 2. 11. So you have (*Gal.* 4. 4, 5.) God ſent forth his Son in our fleſh, that we might receive the adoption of Sons. God firſt takes our nature and marries it to his own *Son*, that ſo we might be united to him in his nature; This is the Antitype and modell of all relations; God one with fleſh, here is Father, and Son, Husband, and Wife, all relations meet in this one. 2. It is by this that we have communion with God, we had never ſeen God, had not he manifeſted himſelfe thus familiarly in our own fleſh; communion is in things, and between perſons ſutable; There was no ſutableneſſe between God and us, untill he appeared in our own likeneſſe, but now he made himſelfe as it were fit for converſe with the unworthieſt Creatures; there

there is a ſweet ſympathy between Chriſt and us, by reaſon that he dwels in the ſame houſe of clay, as it were with us; the devill himſelfe when he comes to the *Indians* as their God, to draw their hearts to worſhip him, appeares in the forme of a man, that ſo he might the better converſe with them: The bleſſed *God* was willing to manifeſt infinite goodneſſe to the Creature, and to converſe with them, and that all terrifying apparitions might be ſhunned, he appears as a man, that ſo we may have intimate fellowſhip and communion with him; with what a holy boldneſſe may ſoules draw nigh to *God*, and delight to behold him, and converſe with him, now he is in ſuch a habit of love and ſutableneſſe unto our own ſences? Why art thou ſtrange, poore trembling ſoule, and ſtandeſt afare off, as if it were death to draw nigh? Of whom art thou afraid? What viſion of amazement doſt thou behold? Is God come down among men, and thou canſt not look on him, leſt thou dye and periſh for ever? Why, caſt one look more, and be not diſcouraged? It is true, God is come down, but not in flaming fire, not in the armour of juſtice, and everlaſting burnings, but cloathed with the garments of fleſh, and ſweetly deſires to converſe with thee after thine own form. Nothing can be a ſtronger

motive to allure poore ſoules unto termes of peace and love as this, that *God* is come down, not to conſume them with the brightneſſe of his glory, but to beſeech them to ſee with their own eyes their eternall happineſſe. Let all poore ſoules come and put in their hands, and they may feele *Gods* heart come, and behold life and immortality inhabiting the tabernacles of earth, and their own peace and eternall happineſſe in their owne fleſh. Who can make any excuſe now that he beleeves not? Why do ſoules now ſtand off? What can be deſired by loſt ſoules more? Oh that I might ſee *God*, ſay ſome ſoules, why, he is come down in the likeneſſe of man; he walkes in our own ſhape; Oh, ſaith another, might I have my heart united to *God*; why, he is come down on purpoſe, and hath united our own nature to himſelfe; *God* hath left all the world without excuſe, he hath condeſcended below himſelfe, that we might be above our ſelves.

In a word, by this the way of life is paved, and all the bars and blocks taken out of the way, all objections ſtifled in the birth, and anſwered before they are made; In this manifeſtation juſtice and mercy ſweetly kiſſe each other, and have their equall joy, free grace, and merit, bounty and beauty, fulneſſe and nothingneſſe are made one, and triumph together,

together, the moſt hidden things revealed, and the worſt things advanced, all things become nothing, and nothing all things; our nature which lay in rags enriched with the unſearchable treaſures of glory; that fleſh, which was ſo weake as not able to put forth a hand to ſave its own life, enabled to ſave millions of ſoules, and bring forth the greateſt deſignes of *God*; and that fleſh, which the Apoſtle cals *a vile body*, enobled and advanced beyond the nature of Angels: This, this is the great myſtery hid from Ages, and Generations of men, that *God* lives in our fleſh, and there acts all the parts of his glory. It is now no wonder that man is made one to God, and hath boldneſſe through faith even to go into heaven, ſeeing *God* is come to carry them up with him; this was the firſt and great experiment which ever *God* did make of the fulneſſe of his love, and glory, and we have now ſeene that in our fleſh, which could never have been ſeene in it ſelfe.

Uſe 1. Seeing this is ſo great a myſtery, what uſe can we make enough of it? doubtleſſe it cannot be accounted leſſe than a ſpring of unconceivable comfort to all poore ſoules, yea, in whatſoever condition they be; give me leave to extract ſome few grounds of ſtrong ſupport and joy, and we need no chymicall art,

the conſideration doth naturally drop the ſtrongeſt ſpirits of rejoycing and incouragement, that can be poſſible.

Unto two ſorts I ſhall eſpecially direct this uſe.

1 To poor ſoules, that are yet in the embryo, under the firſt and loweſt convictions of their own condition, who firſt for feare of the wrath to come, and would faine draw neer, but dare not touch the ſtaffe of their eternal comfort; this point will yield water of life, at the firſt ſtriking unto their poor ſoules, yea, and more then their ſoules are able to beare, or their doubts are able to anſwer, if they will but obſerve what the weight of this expreſſion is.

2. To beleevers, who are yet trembling at the ſight of their many ſins, and not yet cleered up in the ſpirituall notions of the *Goſpell*.

For the firſt,

Let me ſpeak to you drooping hearts, who long after life and ſalvation, and to ſee *God* as yours, more then life it ſelfe; what ailes thy heart, who hath made thee afraid? what is that ſhakes thy knees, and dryes up thy marrow, and breaks thy bones, and cuts thy joynts and nerves.

Oh, why doſt thou ſtart back in the day of thy trouble! Why, you will ſay God is mine

mine enemy; I am a ſtranger to him, I ſhall never ſee a glimpſe of the face of God, where all my happineſſe lies, ſin hath brought forth death and miſery in my ſoule; God's law condemnes me, my owne conſcience accuſeth me, and juſtice will have its due: Theſe and ſuch like, are the uſuall apprehenſions of ſuch convinced ſoules.

Yet notwithſtanding all this, let the word of the Goſpell be heard, let the truth be heard ſpeak for it ſelfe: God is manifeſted in the fleſh: Were thy ſoule loſt ſeven fold more then it is, the ſpirit of this expreſſion is able to recover thee, and ſet thee upon thy legs, with a crowne of glory on thy head.

1. God himſelfe is come into the world to offer the tearms of love, and peace unto thy poore ſoule, becauſe it was impoſſible for thee to come to God; he is come to thee, and hath laid aſide, as it were his owne glory, while he converſes with thee. This is no ordinary deſign that God hath to drive, when he is ſo wonderfully manifeſt in thy own fleſh; when God manifeſting himſelfe as formerly, in Thunder and Lightning, with an innumerable company of Angels, all having their ſwords of juſtice and vengeance drawn; well might poore ſoules tremble, and run into corners, for who would ever be able to indure his

comming ; but loe poore ſoule, God is come in fleſh, with an Olive branch of eternall peace in his hand, and bids you all be witneſſe, he is not come to deſtroy, but to ſave: There be but two things in God, which might diſcourage poor ſoules from making approaches to him, the infinite brightneſſe of his glory, whereby there is ſuch a great diſtance between God and his poor creatures.

2. The infinite ſeverity and exactneſſe of his juſtice, whereby he is clothed with vengeance ; but behold, theſe terrifying ſights are gone, God hath made his appearance as a man, as one of us, and there ſhall not be the leaſt diſtance between us; and this God is likewiſe in our own Nature, to ſatisfie himſelfe, and to gratifie his own juſtice ; for this is the naturall meaning of this phraſe ; that God hath taken fleſh, to reconcile fleſh to himſelfe.

Bring out thy ſins, and weigh them to the utmoſt aggravation of them, and take in every circumſtance, both of law and Goſpell, and ſet but this in the other ſcale, that God is manifeſted in fleſh, to take away ſin ; how would all thy iniquities, ſeem lighter then vanity, yea, be as nothing, in compariſon to that which is laid downe as a propitiation for theſe ſins.

It

It is moſt true, that nothing can reveale God at ſuch a diſtance from a ſoule as ſin; it being that which is moſt contrary to his bleſſed Nature, who is infinitely pure and holy.

Yet, here is the *myſtery* of godlineſſe; that God himſelfe is become the ſatisfier of himſelfe, and that in our owne Nature: The utmoſt height of ſin lies in regard that it is a contradiction to the immortall God; therefore it is ſo hainous, that the death of Angels and men could never expiate it, or reconcile ſinners to God; but if God will dye in our Nature, and lay downe himſelfe as a ranſome, how is the demerit of ſin ſwallowed up in the incomprehenſible redundancy of divine glory? and now, how doth grace ſuperabound infinite wiſdom laid down for ſatisfaction of the tranſitory and finite tranſgreſſions of the poor creature, the Law-giver ſuffering for the offences done againſt the Law? Doth not your hearts yet begin to leap within you, and the blood to come againe in your faces, and ſtrength into your ſinews? In the apprehenſions of this *myſtery* of comfort, ſurely that ſoule is ſhut up in the inmoſt dungeon of unbeliefe, where never a beam of the glory of God ſhines.

But yet, will you have more, at leaſt to leave

you without excuſe ? This manifeſtation is not only a diſcovery in fleſh, but to fleſh.

And therefore, as he comes in our Nature to ſatisfie, ſo he comes in the Goſpell, freely and fully to offer the termes of love, in the richeſt and moſt alluring expreſſions ; And if God cannot ſatisfie, what will ? What ever was done in our Nature, in order to redemption, was none other, then God acting out his owne love, and grace, and glory. So the Apoſtle ſaith, the blood of God was offered, meaning, that the efficacy and life of all that offering, was from God in our Nature, uſing that as an Organ or inſtrument to act by : Let unbeliefe come forth and make its plea, and let it dare to appear before this conſideration ; is not God enough to ſatisfie thy conſcience ? Oh, come nigh poor ſoules, ſee what an infinite ground of comfort is laid in for you ; let the rich and glorious openings of the hearts ; had God ſpoke from Heaven by himſelfe, and called poor creatures, that lye in the midſt of ſin, crying out who ſhall deliver, and had he ſaid, I will pardon you by my owne prerogative ; I made the Law, I will diſpence with it, rather then you ſhall periſh, what ſoule would not have been raiſed but up, even from the bottome of Hell ? (and yet unbeliefe might ſcruple, and ſay, what

ſhall

ſhall become of infinite juſtice, ſhall that be diſhonored to ſave me?) But alas, that were not as much, as for God to come in our fleſh, and come as a price, and pay himſelfe before our eyes.

In the *Rom.* 9. The Apoſtle gives this as the great reaſon of all his actions, *he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy*; if there were nothing elſe but God's will in the ſalvation of poor ſoules, who hath contradicted his will? But God hath not only ſhowne his willingneſſe, but hath really undertaken the effect of it by his God-head, and ingaged his own honour, and all his glory, in the tranſacting of it. Oh then, why ſhouldſt thou feare to caſt thy ſelfe into the infinite Ocean of God's owne glory, notwithſtanding all thy vileneſſe, God himſelfe ſtands to lead thee by the hand, and hath put a price ſufficient in the hands of juſtice, to ſtop the clamors againſt thee; and if thou yet feareſt to come to God, yet come to thy owne fleſh; goe to Chriſt as having thy owne Nature, and knowes how to pitty thee. What can be ſaid more, to draw on thy trembling heart? if God himſelfe, and God ſo fitted and qualified, as it were, will not, muſt not men dye and periſh in unbeliefe, and who can pitty them? that when God's juſtice is ſatisfied, our Conſcience ſhould

be

be unſatisfied; that when God is come downe ſo low to us, we ſhould ſtand queſtioning, whether we ſhould come to him, what is it, but to ſay, all that God is, and doth, is leſſe, or too little to comfort me.

2. *Uſe* reacheth to theſe poor beleevers, who yet ſtand afarre off, and though they have hopes, yet have little Faith, and cannot ſo fully cloſe in with the Goſpell, nor draw nigh ſo boldly before God, thorough the fears of their owne hearts. This point opens a door of rich entrance into the preſence of God himſelfe; the bleſſed God hath made a Portall into Heaven, not of Iron or Braſſe, but of thy owne fleſh; this is that new and living way which is conſecrated from Heaven, and now, with what freeneſſe and boldneſſe of heart, mayeſt thou draw neer to God. Unbelief is ſtrangled, after this conſideration; ſince God is come in the fleſh, we may beleeve any thing, for this is the greateſt impoſſibility that could be. Why is God come downe ſo ſuitable, ſo lowly, if he would have thy poor ſoule be afraid to come to him, if he had any other intention, but to give ſtrong conſolation to the moſt ſad ſoules, he would have appeared in another forme, made uſe of another way, which ſhould have beſpoke ſuch a deſign? But what is the meaning of this at firſt ſight:

God

God manifeſt in fleſh, but this, as if God had ſaid; you will not come to me, I will come to you, and that you may ſee how reall and tender I am of your good, I have taken up your owne fleſh to make my great diſcoveries in; put your hand into my heart, and ſee how love beates, and look into your owne hearts, and ſee what you want, I have taken the ſame Nature, that I may more ſenſibly ſupply you, and that nothing may diſquiet your hearts, or dazle your eyes, I have ſet out my owne glory in love, and ſutableneſſe to your capacities; this, and much more of the like expreſſions, are the very naturall ſpeakings of this bleſſed *myſtery*. Oh, conſider once againe, what a heart of love was in this deſign, and what a ground of eternall comfort and ſupport is there to thy heart in this; God is in thy owne Nature, to take upon him all the miſeries of thy Nature, and to ſupply thy fleſh with his fulneſſe; this is none other then God's heart leaping out into our boſomes; and as much as if God ſhould have ſaid expreſſely, poor ſoules, I cannot keep from you, I love your very Nature; I will be nothing, ſo you may be ſomething, my glory ſhall not hinder me, but I will vaile it, rather then it ſhall hurt you, I will take as much delight in your fleſh, as in my owne Son, ſo I may but ſhew my

ſelfe

ſelfe kind and tender to you, and ſo I may have communion with you, and you with me, I care not, if I become one with you, live in your very fleſh. Oh, that ever there ſhould be a heart of unbeliefe, after theſe ſenſible demonſtrations of divine glory and love; wilt thou ſtand off now, doubt now, why what wilt thou have God to doe? can he manifeſt himſelfe in a more taking, alluring ſutable way to thy condition? Is there any thing below fleſh, wherein the great God can humble himſelfe for our good? think of another, and a better way, or elſe for ever beleeve. What, art thou ſhye of God, who is ſo ſweet to thee? many ſoules thinke it a great part of their humility, to ſee their owne unworthineſſe, ſo as to draw back from God? Oh, it is pride to the utmoſt, when God hath made himſelfe low, and is come ſo nigh to us, not to take notice of him; to draw back from ſuch a bleſſed one, who drawes ſo nigh unto us. I beſeech you, gather up your ſpirits, and annoint your hearts with the oyle of gladneſſe; for God himſelfe is come to live among you, and profeſſeth he will have no other life, but among you; there he will manifeſt himſelfe in all his ſweetneſſe and bleſſedneſſe to your ſoule. Lay aſide all coyneſſe and ſtrangeneſſe of ſpirit, ſeeing ſuch a way of familiarity

and

and entercourſe is made between you and God. It is very ſad to ſee believers ſtill ſo ſhye of approaching to God, ſo doubtfull of their acceptance, when God himſelfe ſtoopes firſt, and is ſo in love with our acquaintance, as that he will be as we are. Let not ſuch a Rocke of ſtrength be ſlighted. But every day entertaine ſweet and pretious thoughts of this deſign, and inure your hearts, to a way of believing in this God, ſo fully diſcovered.

Laſtly, Let men and Angels look about them what a mount of viſion is raiſed up for the ſtrongeſt and quickeſt eye to take the faireſt proſpect of glory from, ſeeing God is manifeſt in fleſh; If God begins ſo gloriouſly, how will he end? If God be ſo full of love, as to come down in fleſh, oh what matter of hope is laid before us of what he will be to us? What doth God meane to bring poore ſoules unto? If his heart and glory be let out ſo full at firſt, beleeve, and wait for the moſt glorious openings of all Gods glory, ſeeing that he hath took the firſt riſe of his manifeſtations ſo ſutable to us; he is now manifeſted in fleſh, and hath laid out a world of glory in that, but he ſhall be manifeſt in himſelfe.

SER.

SERMON V.

1 Tim. 3. 16.

God manifeſted in the fleſh, &c.

ALl divine truths, though they are but one in ſubſtance and nature, yet they are various in their manifeſtations, and have their particular glory and luſtre that ſparkles from them.

Here is in this verſe one and the ſame glory of God diſcovered in divers adminiſtrations, and yet every one ſhining forth in a diſtinct excellency. God was manifeſted in fleſh, made the object of ſhame and miſery in the world, humbled and abaſed in our fleſh, and that God is againe juſtified in the Spirit, and ſet forth as an object for Angels to looke and admire

admire, and for the world to lay hold on and beleeve, and then this God is taken up againe into glory, that is, advanced to that dignity which he ſeemed to leave and bid adieu unto for a while; and all this but a delineation of the various conditions and conſiderations of one and the ſame perſon Jeſus Chriſt, and carring on but one deſigne in ſeverall repreſentations for the good of poore ſinners. This is that which the Apoſtle cals a great myſtery, that is, the moſt hidden and profound deſigne that ever God undertooke to act, wherein all the depth of his counſels and heart was. For here is nothing elſe but God appearing in manifold ſhapes and formes to make poore ſoules partakers of himſelfe, and raiſe up our conditions to a ſtate of happineſſe and glory.

Of the firſt of theſe particulars we have largely ſpoken, it being the prime and great myſtery in this great order of myſteries. And yet there is ſo much in it as may againe take up our thoughts with new wonderment, what can be more ſweet and precious than a manifeſtation of God to poore Creatures; but for God to be manifeſted in fleſh ſo ſutable to us, herein lies the myſtery; that is,

1. God manifeſting himſelfe in a way of humiliation, as one that would lay aſide his

his glory to come and live with us, and undergoe the pooreſt and meaneſt condition for us.

2. In fleſh, that God ſhould make our owne nature which had ſinned againſt him, and was ſo infinitely below him, to be our great ordinance of reconciling us to himſelfe, and the organ of union, and communion with his own bleſſed nature; for God to manifeſt himſelfe unto fleſh is not ſuch a myſtery, it may ſoone be conceived; God did manifeſt himſelf to *Adams* nature: but that God ſhould be manifeſt in fleſh is the *great myſtery of godlineſſe*; God himſelf taking fleſh, and dwelling in it with all his fulneſſe, and advancing that fleſh into oneneſſe, and making that fleſh more glorious than Angels; through that fleſh opening all his Counſels, dying, and ſatisfying for the tranſgreſſions of fleſh, and making the richeſt diſcoveries of love and free grace unto the ſons of men, this may well be called a *myſtery*, and a *great myſtery*, an aſtoniſhing, and amazing expreſſion: And all other myſteries are wrapt up in this, this is that which Angels do ſo pry into.

Let us view it a little more in the contrivance and depth of it; God had an eternall deſign to diſcover his infinite love to ſome beſides himſelfe, he therefore creates a world of Crea-

Creatures, ſome rationall, and only capable of love, others irrationall, and ſerviceable to that one Creature which he makes the top of the whole Creation; ſet up one man *Adam* as a common perſon to repreſent the reſt, gives him abundance of glorious qualifications, ſet him over the workes of his hands made all ſubject to him, as if he were the darling of love. Now one would thinke Gods love and glory had been centred here, that he had taken up his abode for ever; but behold this man was but for a day, he fell from God, and all that were in him, even the whole world, and all theſe beloved ones that were in Gods eye from eternity fell with him into the ſame gulph of ſin and miſery; Gods face is hid, not a ſight of him, but in flaming fire to condemne ſinners, and execute vengeance; but God had a further reach of love, and wiſdome, and out of this darke cloud let ſome glimpſes of another diſcovery, though ſo darkly that few could ſpell it, or make any comfortable ſence or application of it to their own ſoul: But by degrees God hints it out more, points out with the finger by types and ſhadowes, makes ſome models of it in outward Ceremonies, yet all hid and dark, that in three thouſand yeares men were but gueſſing, and hoping through promiſes for a manifeſtation of God.

And this is the meaning of that in *Eph.* 3. that it was hid from Ages and Generations of men, that is, hid in Gods breſt from them, they knew not what to make of this deſigne; but at laſt God opens himſelfe fully; and what doth all this workings end in? why, in this, that God is manifeſted in fleſh; the whole of all this myſtery is ſummed up in this, that God tooke the fleſh of theſe poore ſinners which he had ſo loved, and joynes himſelfe to it, and cals it Chriſt a Saviour, and Redeemer of theſe poore ſinners that lay condemned by the Law, and under condemation with the whole world; and God comes to lye in the wombe of a Virgin, to be borne as we are, to live in the world in the pooreſt and meaneſt eſtate, as if he had not wherewithall to lay his head, he dies in that fleſh, and is glorified in it; and joynes it ſo nigh, as that there is a communion of properties between them; that attributed to God which is proper to fleſh, as to be borne, to ſuffer, that to fleſh which is only proper to God; who can chooſe but wonder when he thinkes of this phraſe, that a peece of fleſh ſhould be called God, and God who is immortall, incomprehenſible be made fleſh, and dwell among us; fleſh infinitely provoking God, and God in the ſame Fleſh infinitely pleaſed and ſatisfied.

God

God veiling himſelfe with Fleſh, which was a way to darken his glory, and yet unveiling at the ſame time the deepeſt and dar.eſt of his deſignes in the moſt bleſſed and comfortableſt way to ſoules; this ſwallowes up our thoughts, and raiſeth our faith to beleeve any thing, after this, when a ſoule can look on God as in his owne fleſh, and ſee him at one time as Saviour, and his Father, and his Friend, and his Reconciler, as his Juſtification, and his Sanctification, how can his heart containe within it ſelfe, but leap out of it ſelfe as one loſt in the admiration of it; all the actings of Salvation turne upon this hinge; when Chriſt was borne into the world, the Apoſtle ſaith, *Ioh.* 1. 14. *We ſaw his glory as of the only begotten Son of God, full of grace and truth,* noting out, that at firſt ſight of him, ſo much glory ſparkled from him as could appear from none but a God walking up and down the world, or at leaſt his own naturall Son that came out of his boſome.

I will adde but two things by way of uſe to ſhut up this point.

Uſe 1. Study this myſtery above all things, nothing ſo pleaſant, nothing more deep, come but once to know the myſtery of God in our fleſh, and thou wilt deſire ſoone to be taken into fellowſhip with it; the Apoſtle deſired

to know nothing but Chriſt, and him crucified, this is none other than the Lord Jeſus; whatever expreſſion is given of godlineſſe, it is none other than God in Chriſt; what delight ſhould ſoules take in the looking on their own happineſſe? with what joy ſhould we draw water out of this well of Salvation; the great reaſon of the ſhallowneſſe of our comforts, the ſhortneſſe of our hopes, and faintneſſe of our ſpirits, the lowneſſe of our graces, is from the not-knowing this myſtery: we looke on our ſelves, on our preſent attainements, at ſome ſcattred promiſes, but not fully on God in Chriſt; God in our own fleſh, a ſoule would ſee here a fountaine opened of grace and comfort that could never run dry.

1. God hath ſet our own nature as a vaſt pipe to his Godhead, that it may flow out in all manner of fulneſſe upon our hearts; our fleſh ſtands not for a cypher, but it is an Organ of life and grace to us. If we ſaw ſuch a fulneſſe in our owne fleſh laid in on purpoſe to inrich us, would we be ſo poor, want ſo much? We eye this, and that, but know not that all the fulneſſe of God lies in our own Fleſh, to be emptied upon us.

2. God hath in our own fleſh laid out the modell and draught of what he will doe unto

all his Saints for ever, for he made Chriſt the great Epitome of all his deſigne, and thou maieſt ſee thorough thy fleſh at once, what thou art deſign'd unto, and how high and rich thou ſhalt be, what a deſign God hath upon thee; for look what was done to our Nature in Chriſt, ſhall at length be done to all the perſons of the Saints in Heaven. If we knew this, how high would our hopes be, and how lofty our expectations, after the utmoſt inrichings of the great God? For to what end hath God made fleſh ſo glorious, but to ſhew what he will by that make us.

3. What ever God is in himſelfe, thorough our fleſh, he is to us, if he be good, or merciſull, or gracious, or powerfull, &c. For this manifeſtatiou is a ſuiting of all that God is to us, that when we eye this *myſtery*, we may ſee what ever God is acted out to the comfort and benefit of our owne poor ſoules; God himſelfe making all his attributes and glory ſerviceable, to the good ends of his poor creature, and that in and thorough their owne fleſh.

Oh, my Brethren, let not ſuch a ſtrong hold be paſſed by, not ſuch a treaſury be unlookt into: In this *myſtery*, you have Heaven brought downe to Earth, yea, more then Heaven; For God himſelfe is come downe

to open his heart to you. Let nothing take off your eye from this, ſet Faith on work immediate y to eye this fulneſſe; one mite of Faith on God in Chriſt, that is in our owne Nature, brings in more grace and comfort then a thouſand conſiderations of any thing elſe; yea indeed, it is the only ſpirituall way of conveighing all comfort to the ſoule; there is no ſaving knowledge of God, but as he is manifeſt in Chriſt, and doe not thinke that God is gone out of fleſh, that is, that Chriſt hath left his humane Nature behind him, and is only gone up in his ſpirit to Heaven, nor but this fleſh of thine is received up into glory, and ſtand as an eternall monument of love, and is the great Ordinance unto the end of the world of life and ſalvation, and God ſhall come againe in the ſame fleſh, though not as abaſed, but glorified. Oh Brethren, what ſucceſſive ſweetneſſe, and without any intermiſſion, would flow out on your hearts, if you did by Faith lay your heads at this pipe: How canſt thou want grace, when thy own fleſh hath it without meaſure; and on purpoſe to fill thee? why art thou ſad, when thy own Nature is made reconciler of thee to God? Bretheren, you live not like men under this deſign, that know what ſuch a *myſtery* meanes, you would ſee enough and to ſpare, a redundancy

dancy of every thing you want in this Lord Jeſus; and the floods of immortality and glory would ſoone break over your unbeliefe, and ſwell your hopes and joyes, beyond all bounds. God hath made our Nature a Myne of all ſorts of rich and pretious graces, that by digging into it, we may ſee our eſtate. Whatever the perſon of Chriſt hath in himſelfe, is all to convey unto us. Oh, that you were but inſighted into theſe glories! had but acquaintance with this diſcovery of God, how bleſſed might you live! What a happineſſe muſt it needs be, to ſee God in our own Nature, and our Natures in him, and to behold nothing elſe but love, acting in a fulneſſe of all grace and glory, to a poor ſoule!

Let your whole ſpirits be carried out thus fully to Jeſus Chriſt, and with both hands, even with heart and ſoule claſpe about Jeſus Chriſt, and you will ſoon find depths of love and grace, power and ſweetneſſe, overflowing and ſwallowing up your heart.

A ſoule hath ſpace enough to expatiate its ſelfe, and hath a ſure Rock to reſt on; other things are narrow, and circumſcribe the thoughts; all the promiſes of particular graces are gathered up in this one manifeſtation of God. Thinke upon love in this or that communication, either in outward or inward

graces ; ſtill we are ſhut up, our thoughts can goe beyond all that ; but God manifeſted in Chriſt, there is room enough for a ſoule to let out his utmoſt thoughts, and to inlarge his affections, and yet there is no taking in by one ſoule, the vaſtneſſe of this *myſtery*, or the compleatneſſe of this fulneſſe; When a ſoule hath got out grace enough for this condition, and yet ſtill that fountaine runs, and knowes no proportion ; if we would therefore ſtudy to know how to uſe this *myſtery*, we ſhould find our comforts exceeding our doubts, and our ſupplies our wants. When Saylers are out in the Ocean, they feare not, though ſtorms ariſe, and the Ship toſſe ; But when they come nigh land, then they feare, Sand and Rocks then lye undiſcovered. So it is with a poor ſoule, as long as he lancheth out by Faith into the fulneſſe of Chriſt ; it is ſafe in the midſt of the greateſt ſtormes, all the feares of unbeliefe are, when we come nigh the ſhore of our own duties and performances, and come to ſee the land of our weak workings, then we come into ſhallow water, and ſtick faſt in miſpriſions, and are ſcattered by doubts and feares, becauſe there is not water enough, not a ſtream deep enough to beare up the burthen of our ſinking and dying ſoules.

That we may therefore know how to act our Faith

Faith to get ſtrong conſolation and full ſupplies.

1. Faith muſt goe directly unto God as in our fleſh, that is, unto Jeſus Chriſt, and take in nothing by the way which may divert its ſtrength, never ſtop untill it faſten on this fulneſſe of God in Chriſt. For when the eye of Faith roles here and there, and takes in but partiall ſights of Chriſt, as in ſome particular promiſe only of this and that grace, and doth not fully ſet on Jeſus Chriſt, as God in our Nature, it loſeth the efficacy of that influence, which alſo would come; and beſides, it divides the ſtrength of its owne act, which is moſt ſtrong, as it doth adæquately rely on Jeſus Chriſt, and ſingly cloſeth in with him; for the truth, is, promiſes and actings, or what ever way God lets out himſelfe, is but to allure and draw on the ſoule to an immediate cloſe with the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt.

2. Know, that though there be ſome things in Chriſt, which are moſt proper for ſome acts of Faith; as Chriſt dying, and crucified for a recumbents Faith unto the ſatisfying of his ſoul, in the pardon of ſin; yet the ſtrongeſt & pureſt acts of Faith are theſe, which take in Chriſt as ſuch a perſon, laid out in all his glory, and all his offices as ſutable to the condition of the ſoul. And the more comprehenſive acts of Faith are taken in Chriſt in his

his fulneſſe, the more are the injoyments of it, and the more lively the influences; As the more Iron is ſet at the advantage of the ſtrongeſt point of the Loadſtone, and adæquately laid for an immediate cloſe, the ſtronger impreſſion is left; and the more powerfull it is attracted, all ſuch electricall bodies, worke (as all other) according to the propinquity, immediation, and adæquateneſſe of the approach of other things of a ſutable Nature to them. Therefore the Apoſtle ſaith, *Heb.* 12. looking unto Jeſus, *the Author and finiſher of our Faith*, ſtanding and beholding as with a ſtedfaſt eye, what he is, from firſt to laſt, as the Author and finiſher of our Faith. So in another place, 1 *Pet.* 2. *To whom come as to a living ſtone, we are built up* &c. Theſe looſe and tranſient glances on the actions and offices of Chriſt, bring in but looſe and ordinary communications; but hearty and full out-goings to him, as God is in him, and as ſuch a perſon, thus and thus qualified from Heaven, carries power and life with it. And theſe vaſt and ſerious ſpirits who are not content only with flaſhie or ſecondary actings on Jeſus Chriſt, but are longing to be diving into the depths of Chriſts glory and excellency, carry along with them impreſſions of an abiding and tranſforming

forming Nature. Oh, therefore be ambitious only of apprehending what is the riches of this glorious *myſtery*, and let not courſe and common apprehenſions of Chriſt content you.

Some think it a carnall apprehenſion of Jeſus Chriſt, to know him as in fleſh, it is true, to apprehend him abſolutely ſo, as only having fleſh, and going up and down in weakneſſe: But to conſider Chriſt as God manifeſted in fleſh, and that fleſh acted by God, and filled with God, is a true and ſpirituall apprehenſion of Chriſt, and that wherein lies one of the greateſt myſteries of godlineſſe; for we are not to underſtand this as a myſtery only for that time: As if God came and once manifeſted himſelf in fleſh to ſatisfie for the ſins of his Elect, and ſo to leave it down againe, but very fleſh remaines to this day, and ſhall remaine, and all the ſpirit and life which the Saints ſhall have unto the end of the world, is to be conveyed through that perſon which hath our fleſh; yea, the Spirit it ſelfe dwels in it, and is conveyed through it; therefore looke upon this as a ſtanding manifeſtation of God to your ſoules, and b. leeve perfectly on it. See but how God hath fitted an object for faith in this myſtery. This expreſſion that God was manifeſt in

Fleſh

Fleſh is ſo laid out, that it doth as it were create faith in every ſoule that looks in it.

1. What is fitter for a poore ſoule who hath nothing than God himſelfe, who is the utmoſt object of faith, the happineſſe of the poore creature depending on his relying on God. But.

2. Becauſe God himſelfe is offended, and the ſoule cannot find ground for faith in God himſelfe, you have God manifeſted in our own Fleſh, that is, God takes up our nature, and joynes it to himſelfe as one perſon, and and laies out that before faith: So that here is God, and God ſuited to the particular ſtate and condition of the ſinner; and not only barely acting towards us, but manifeſted in the greateſt love and fulneſſe to us; whatever may feed the humour of unbeliefe is deſtroyed in this: For God hath laid in that in our own nature, which doth not only ſuit, but ſwallow up the wants and miſeries of poore ſoules.

There be but three things can hinder faith.

1. The infinite exactneſſe of divine juſtice which muſt be ſatisfied.

2. The exceeding unworthineſſe of the ſoule.

3. And in the ſight of both theſe, the want of a Mediatour, or ſome ſutable perſon

which

which may ſtand between the ſinner and God; which the ſoule may go unto, and firſt cloſe withall, before it deales with the infinite glory of God himſelfe.

Now in this myſtery faith is fully ſatisfied.

1. God hath ſeemed to paſſe by, and overlook the unworthineſſe of his Creature, himſelfe diſdaines not to be as they are, to wear their own fleſh; and

2. That his juſtice may be ſatisfied, and their hearts quieted, he hath but the union of that fleſh ſet up a perſon which is nothing but fulneſſe, and righteouſneſſe, love, and bowels to receive the firſt acts of our faith, and to have immediate union, and communion with us, and yet ſtill this is God himſelfe manifeſted to us; and though we pitch not our faith immediately on God, yet at laſt we come to him, and our faith lives in God before it is aware, as it were, through the ſweet intervention of that perſon which is God himſelfe called but by another name.

Take faith as it lies in adherence and recumbency, or, as it may be ſometimes taken, for an act of aſſurance both have enough to lay hold on in this myſtery: For the firſt, Take the pooreſt ſoule that groanes under the ſaddeſt wants, and burthens, and ſeemes by ſin to lye at the vaſteſt diſtance from God,

yet

yet he hath ground here to beleeve, that is, to go unto, and rely, and caſt himſelfe freely and fully, with the greateſt confidence on Jeſus Chriſt: For here is none other than God himſelfe offering himſelfe as the righteouſneſſe and riches of ſuch a poore ſoule, and that in ſuch a way as he ſhall be judge with his own eyes; and for the faith of aſſurance what a ground is there for a ſoule to be perſwaded of all the reality and truth of Gods intentions, ſeeing he hath ſo ſenſibly demonſtrated it in taking our own fleſh; if God cannot content himſelfe, who ſhall? And he profeſſeth he is pleaſed, and delighted in that Union, and ſatisfaction by it, which he hath in our nature; *This is my beloved Son, in whom my ſoule is well pleaſed*, *Mat.* 3. *ult.* Doubtleſſe Gods heart muſt needs be much in, yea, and infinitely ſet on the ſalvation of the ſouls of poor ſinners, ſeeing he hath made ſuch an overture to advantage it, as the taking up our fleſh which was ſo far below him; and what can poor ſoules now beleeve otherwiſe, but that God cannot be content with his own honour and glory alone, but he muſt impart it, yea, and to thoſe which have beene the moſt unworthy, and moſt contrary to him and his glory.

So that Beleevers, you ſee, how heaven and earth,

earth, God and man, are combined together to do you good, and what opportunity have you of living glorioufly upon God in your owne nature; Faith deſires no more but an incouragement, and a perſon to cloſe with, and in both you have a ſutableneſſe from this, that God is manifeſt in fleſh; that God is manifeſted in ſuch a way as fleſh, is enough to move any heart to beleeve that he is as he acts; but this expreſſion doth not only ſtir up hope, but fits the very perſon ſo ſweetly, as if one would deſire, or propoſe a thing to ones deſires, it could not be more qualified than this, that God is manifeſted in fleſh; for here is God himſelfe brought downe to our termes, and made ſubject to our owne propoſitions. Oh that this exhortation might be of force but to improve this glorious deſigne to the ſupplying of all your wants; and the making up all your loſſes; and when you make uſe of Chriſt, go not to him as one who hath ſomething, but all things; yea, let faith have its courſe, and hinder it not from a full and immediate laying hold on the riches and fulneſſe of God himſelfe, both for Juſtification and Sanctification; for it is God himſelfe which in your fleſh is made the proper object of your faith.

Uſe 2. That ſeeing God is manifeſt in Fleſh

fleſh, that is, ſo bleſſedly in Chriſt for us, labour to get a manifeſtation of God in your own fleſh, for this is the comfort to your ſoules; what if God be made one with a common nature in Chriſts perſon if he be not made one with my ſpirit? You heare often that there is a myſtery in Gods being diſcovered in Fleſh, but who among you have had the manifeſtation of this God in your own ſoules? The Apoſtle ſpeaking of the ſweet fruit of his ſufferings, ſaies it lay in this, that the life of Chriſt was manifeſted in his mrotall fleſh; doubtleſſe Gods deſigne of manifeſting himſelfe in fleſh in generall, was, that by that he might manifeſt himſelfe to fleſh in particular; and theſe ſoules can have no ſpeciall comfort in this, that God is manifeſt in their nature, (that is, in Chriſt) except they have a ſpeciall diſcovery of this God to themſelves; actions are ſutable to the being of things: if God be in our nature, he will act in that nature what may be moſt glorious to the good of ſoules. Look to your own hearts, what manifeſtations of God are there; Doſt thou ſay, thou beleeveſt that God was manifeſt in fleſh? And yet there is not a glimpſe of Gods glory in thy own heart; why, the Deviles can ſay as much and periſh; why hath God taken up our nature? What, for

for himſelf? No: But by that as a medium he might communicate himſelf to our perſons; Let not ſoules flatter themſelves with generall notions of the Goſpell, and the myſtery of it; If God be not in thy perſon, as truly, though not as fully, as in thy nature, thou haſt no particular comfort from this deſigne; when *Paul* ſpeaks of the Goſpell in generall, he ſpeaks particularly of the manifeſtation of it to him as his comfort, *It pleaſed God to reveale Chriſt in me, Gal.* 1. whatever is done in our nature in common is to be done ſpiritually (though not litterally) on our perſons; and if God be revealed in Chriſt, and that Chriſt be not revealed in us, all is nothing; the end of God is by that to bring up our hearts to himſelfe, and that we may know what is the riches of that glory which he intends to communicate by the firſt fruits of it in our own ſoules.

SERM.

SERMON VI.

1 Tim. 3. 16.

Juſtified in the ſpirit, &c.

HAving ſpoken of the firſt and great myſtery of godlineſſe which the Apoſtle reckons up in this verſe, that *God was manifeſted in fleſh*: Another preſents it ſelfe before our eyes to be admired; In the things of the Goſpell you go from glory to glory; you can no ſooner come out of one roome of bleſſedneſſe, but you ſtep into another as glorious; every ſtep to heaven is a new opening of Gods glory; What would a ſoule expect more than a manifeſtation of God, and in fleſh ſo fitly for his good? Who would not ſit down under the ſhadow of thi happineſſe and go no farther; but yet this is not all, this God is ſet forth in another

another myſtery, as, *Juſtified in the ſpirit*; before one is able to go to the bottome of one myſtery he is led into the boſome of another; ſo thick and faſt doth the glory of God break in upon the poore ſoule, as he is not able to keep his eye faſt on one thing, but another as glorious comes to be preſented. Brethren, what a bleſſed thing is it to live in God, to be viewing the myſteries of godlineſſe? Seeing God himſelfe is laid out before your eye as in manifold manifeſtations of his own glory; Saints may do nothing elſe but raviſh their hearts with the diverſity of heavenly light which breakes forth from the boſome of God.

One would thinke there needed no other myſtery to take up the thoughts of a Saint but this, that the bleſſed God is manifeſted in fleſh; Who is able to reach the fulneſſe of this diſcovery? But yet you have another myſtery as great and amazing ſprings out before your eyes, to aſtoniſh you, that this God was *juſtified in ſpirit*.

The firſt reſpects his humiliation in our fleſh: The other the beginning of his exaltation; and yet theſe are onely various expreſſions of Jeſus Chriſt our Mediator.

There was two great things to be done for the ſalvation of ſinners: Satisfaction, and

Juſtification; God now, in regard of theſe two conſiderations, manifeſts himſelfe as in two formes: Firſt, in fleſh, as abaſed and humbled, that in our own nature he might ſatisfie for our ſins, and lay a ground-worke of eternall communion with us; and then as a teſtimony of the reality of this ſatisfaction he was juſtified by or in the ſpirit. So that you have Chriſt ſet out in theſe two conſiderations, as ſtanding in our own fleſh to beare the guilt, and charge, the miſery, and puniſhment of our ſins, and as diſcharged and juſtified from all theſe by the ſpirit.

There be thoſe things to be opened.

1. What it is to juſtifie.
2. What meant by ſpirit.
3. How God is ſaid to be *juſtified in ſpirit.*

For the firſt, to juſtifie, or to be juſtified, are words though commonly ſpoken, yet much miſtaken; *Bellarmine*, and the Jeſuits take it ever in a Phyſicall ſence, for the infuſing habituall principles of grace in the heart, and ſo make it all one with Sanctification, that ſo by that they might have a way of ſetting up their own righteouſneſſe equall with, if not above, the righteouſneſſe of Chriſt; and yet it is not to be denied but ſometimes this word ſignifies to make juſt. But the common and uſuall ſignification is, firſt,

firſt, to pronounce or declare one juſt; So (*Luke* 16. 15.) *Wiſdome is juſtified of her children*, that is, all the ſons of wiſdome will vindicate her from all the falſe aſperſions caſt on her by the ſons of folly in the world, and pronounce her righteous, that there are the iſſues of life in her waies.

That thou mayeſt be juſtified by thy ſayings, *Rom.* 3. 4. that is, declared to be juſt. So in *Mat.* 12. ſaith Chriſt, *out of my words thou ſhalt be juſtified or condemned*; that is, pronounced juſt according as thy words are good.

Secondly, It is taken *ſenſu forenſi*, in a legall ſenſe, for the acquitting or abſolving a Malefactor from the guilt and puniſhment of the Law; *Eſa.* 5. 23. he which juſtifies the wicked, and condemns the righteous is an abomination to the Lord; ſpeaking of the Rulers, and theſe which ſit in judgment, that is, he which laies guilt on an honeſt man, but acquits a wicked man.

How is a man ſaid to be juſtified this way?

1. When as he is falſely accuſed, and is declared by the Judge not to have done the fact, but to be righteous, then he is juſtified from that act.

2. When a man is really accuſed, and yet for, and in conſideration of ſome other thing is acquitted and abolved from the guilt

and puniſhment of that which was laid to him, then he is ſaid to be juſtified alſo.

For the ſecond thing; what is meant by *Spirit*?

This word is likewiſe taken divers waies in Scripture: Sometimes for the ſoule and life of a man; *Into thy hands I commend my Spirit*, *Pſal.* 31. Chriſt cried, and gave up his ſpirit, *Mat.* 27. that is, his life departed from him. But eſpecially it is taken theſe foure waies.

1. For the whole divine Nature, or the God-head. God is a ſpirit, that is, the Nature of God is ſpirituall, unknown to fleſh.

2. It is ſometimes taken for the divine Nature of Chriſt; ſo the Lord is that ſpirit, that is, Jeſus Chriſt is that ſpirit, which is oppoſed to all the outward and fleſhly ordinances of the Law.

3. It is taken for the Holy Ghoſt, or third perſon of the Trinity, as diſtinct from the Father and the Sonne. There be three that beare witneſſe in Heaven; the Father, the Word, and the Spirit. 1 *John* 5. It is the ſpirit which beares witneſſe, for he is truth. I will ſend the Comforter, even the ſpirit of truth, *John* 14. And I will pray the Father for it. *John* 3.

4 Taken for the product, or work of the Spirit; what is borne of the Spirit is Spirit, that

that is of the ſame Nature with the Spirit it ſelfe. So that now, for God to be juſtified in the Spirit, is not meant as if he had any righteouſneſſe infuſed in him, which he had not before, but that he was juſtified, that is, declared to be righteous, one who had no ſin, neither was guile found in his mouth, and that he was abſolved from all that charge of the guilt and puniſhment of ſin, which was laid upon him, and one who had finiſhed his courſe, and done his worke compleatly, both ſatisfied the law, and the juſtice of God; and that in or by the Spirit, that is, his God-head, or by the vertue and merit of his divine Nature, which made all he did, efficacious and ſatisfactory, the Spirit it ſelfe bearing witneſſe of it, and fully diſcharging him from what was laid upon him.

For theſe words, (as one ſaith) to be brought in anſwer to an objection, which might be made on this, that Chriſt was God manifeſt in fleſh, that is, humbled and abaſed, or elſe he could not have ſuffered; why hence, the world thought he was a deceiver, that he was not ſuch a one as he pretended, took upon him as a malefactor, and uſed him ſo; why, but he was not ſo; for though he was manifeſted in that baſe and low way, and ſo united and clouded in fleſh, yet he was juſtified in

the ſpirit; they ſaw not that inward glory and power which was in Chriſt's Nature, but what ever men eſteemed of him, yet the ſpirit it ſelfe juſtified him.

But ſeeing this is ſo great a *myſtery*, let in the ſecond ranck of the deep things of God, we had need look more narrowly into it, and ſee what the Scripture ſaith concerning this; how Jeſus Chriſt may be ſaid to be juſtified.

This is to be premiſed in generall, that it is ſpoken in oppoſition to his humiliation or manifeſtation in fleſh, for in that he ſeemed to be condemned to walke up and downe as a ſinner, one which was the ſhame of the world; and therefore he is ſaid to be juſtified in the ſpirit; that is,

1. Internally, what ever he was without, yet within he had a ſpirit of glory, his outſide was meane, but his inſide bleſſed.

2. Externally, he was notwithſtanding all the viſible actings of him in the world, and the misapprehenſions of wicked men, yet the ſpirit did ſtill juſtifie him, and cleer him, and declare him to be righteous.

Two things were laid on Chriſt, which he had need to be juſtified from.

1. The falſe aſperſions which the world laid on him; they lookt on him as a deceiver,

a friend of Publicans and Sinners, one which blaſphemed, when he ſaid he was the ſonne of God, one which had a Deyill, and wrought all his miracles by the Deyill.

2. The ſtate he ſtood in under our ſins, have had the guilt and the puniſhment of them laid on him, whereby he ſtood as a viſible malefactor, and under the viſible ſentence of condemnation.

For Chriſt was really charg'd with the ſatisfaction of our ſins, and was liable to all that the Law could ſay to us for them. Now he had need to be juſtified from this, by having an acquittance and abſolution by the ſpirrt of God.

Now, in both theſe wayes may Chriſt be ſaid to be juſtified.

1. He was juſtified in the ſpirit, from all thoſe wicked imputations his enemies laid on him; none were accounted of ſo vile, as Jeſus Chriſt; all the reproaches that could be invented, were laid on him, they called him a Deyill commonly. Now ſee how he was juſtified in the ſpirit, that is; firſt, how cleer he was within in his ſpirit, no guile was found in his mouth.

2. By his Godhead, what bright ſparklings of God, was in the face of Jeſus Chriſt, to the conviction of his enemies? many times

when

when they came to catch him, they were catch'd by the beauty of his glory, and faine to confeſſe he was a righteous one, and that never any ſpake or acted like him: in all that ever he did in the acts of his humiliation, he was juſtified in it, God clearing it up, that he was the true *Meſſias* and Saviour of the world; when he was borne, wiſe men came by the ſpirit to ſee him and worſhip him, when he was baptized the ſpirit came downe viſibly on him, and proclaim'd from Heaven, that he was the beloved Son of God, with him he was infinitely well pleaſed. Nay, come to the uttermoſt degree of his humiliation, when he hung on the Croſſe between two thieves, by his ſpirit he converted one of them, and made them acknowledge he was the righteous man, and they only the ſinners. In a word, what ever he did or ſpoke, the ſpirit did act it in him, and juſtified him in it. *I ſpeak not of my ſelfe, but God teſtifies of me*, *Iohn* 6. He was begotten in the wombe by the ſpirit, led up and downe in the ſpirit, offer'd up by the eternall ſpirit, raiſed from the dead by the ſpirit. That place in the *Romans*, 1. 3. cleers up this; *He was declared to the Sonne of God with power, by the ſpirit of holineſſe in his Reſurrection.* It is a place which anſwers this; *He was of the ſeed of* David

as

as concerning the fleſh, but declared to be the Sonne of God in the ſpirit, when he did riſe againe; as much as to ſay, he was God manifeſt in fleſh, that is, in weakneſs, and yet he was juſtified by the ſpirit of holineſſe, to be the ſonne of God. Chriſt would often call himſelfe the ſon of God, and for that, he was called a blaſphemer, and for that, they ſought to put him to death, as if they had ſaid, we will try that, thou canſt not dye if thou be the Son of God: And ſo when he was put to death, they were confirmed, that he was a deceiver; But now, when he roſe againe of himſelfe, then he was declared with power, to be the ſon of God, that is juſtifyed by the ſpirit of holineſſe; or the holy ſpirit; that ſpirit did declare, that he was full of holineſſe: But this was the leaſt part of Chriſt's juſtification.

2. Chriſt ſtood under the charge of all the ſins of the Elect, as a common perſon, and ſo was by God himſelfe condemned; he bore our ſins on the Tree, in his owne body, that is, was really charged with the guilt, and the puniſhment of it, and though he was not guilty of any ſinne, yet was puniſhed as the greateſt malefactor, ſtanding as our ſurety. Chriſt may ſeem to be condemned, even by God himſelfe, and he muſt come off cleer, or

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elſe lye under the puniſhment of it for ever; for once the charge was laid on Chriſt, the law looks to him.

Now Chriſt that was thus viſibly condemned, he is juſtified in the ſpirit, not only that he was appointed to ſatisfie; but that he had ſatisfied, and took away theſe ſins; and it was reaſon, that if God did charge him with the debt of our ſins, that after he had paid it, he ſhould be acquitted and declared juſt; and the Juſtifyer of theſe, for whom we undertook: Now this is the great meaning of this phraſe; that whereas Chriſt was manifeſt as God in our fleſh, and ſo ſtood under the guilt of our ſins, he was juſtified in his ſpirit, and cleered by God, that he had fully ſatisfied him.

That whereas God was manifeſted in fleſh, that is, as the Apoſtle ſaith, *Rom.* 8. *To condemne ſin in the fleſh*, that ſame God-man was alſo juſtified in the ſpirit, that is, freely and fully acquitted by his God-head from all theſe ſins, and ſo taken up into glory. And Chriſt himſelfe in a Propheſie, when he was to dye, and be judged as a condemned man, he comforts himſelfe with the thoughts of this; *He is neer that juſtifies me, who ſhall condemne? Eſa.* 50. 8. 9. So likewiſe the Apoſtle ſpeaking of Chriſts Reſurrection, *he was put to death in the*

the fleſh, but quickned in, or by, *the ſpirit*, 1 *Pet.* 3. 18. a place fully paralell unto this, *Paul* ſaith, *he was juſtified in the ſpirit*, and *Peter*, *that he was quickned in the ſpirit*; both meane one and the ſame thing, *viz.* that new life which Chriſt had from the dead when he left all our ſins behind him and roſe againe; and by ſpirit is meant his God-head or divine nature, whereby he was both raiſed from the grave, and the guilt of ſin together, he was quickned and juſtified; as a Malefactor, by an abſolution receives a new life after the ſentence of death: and this worke of juſtifying Chriſt is eſpecially laid on Chriſts reſurrection; who when he dyed was as a condemned man, but when he roſe againe appeares as a righteous man, which had finiſhed his worke. For juſtification implies and ſuppoſeth a former guilt laid to ones charge of which he is acquitted. There was reaſon, that if Chriſt bore our ſins, and ſtood as on condemned, having done away ſin, ſhould likewiſe be juſtified from the guilt of what was laid on him, and be pronounced righteous: Chriſt was under the greateſt attainder that ever man was, he ſtood publikely charged with the guilt of a world of ſins, and if he had not been juſtified by the ſpirit, he had ſtill laine under the blame of all, and been liable to the execution

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of all this in his own ſoule; therefore though he was manifeſt in fleſh as one condemned in that fleſh, yet the power of his Godhead raiſed him up from under the power of death, and declared him as a righteous perſon, one that was accepted for, and that had compleatly ſatisfied for poore ſinners. And as at firſt converſion we paſſe from death to life, that is, from an eſtate of death and condemnation to an eſtate of life and juſtification; So did Chriſt at his Reſurrection, from an eſtate of death and guilt which was laid on him to an eſtate of life, and glory and juſtification from ſin; for had there been any ſin unſatisfied for, he could not have been juſtified.

Uſe 1. Is to informe us of the greatneſſe of this myſtery, that God ſhould be juſtified in ſpirit; That God ſhould manifeſt himſelfe is a wonder, and eſpecially in fleſh: But that we ſhould be juſtified, that implies a guilt, ſome default; and doubtleſſe this is one of the wonderfulleſt diſcoveries of his love to to ſoules. How can God be ſaid to be juſtified? who can imagine any evill in the Almighty, who finds folly in the Angels; they are not able to juſtifie themſelves in his ſight; but the myſterie is in this, that God himſelf which was in our fleſh, (which is none other then Chriſt) he is alſo juſtified for us. God

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in our fleſh takes upon him the charge of our debts, and by his owne ſpirit juſtifies himſelfe.

Oh, how are poor ſoules raiſed at theſe expreſſions. All the works of our ſalvation are done by God himſelfe, he taking that on him, and acting over that in the perſon of his Sonne, which muſt be particularly done in them.

Two things were to be done to ſave us; Satisfaction, and Juſtification, payment of debt, and diſcharge of bonds. Why now, God comes in our Nature, and is both puniſhed and juſtified, as if he had done the offence, not we: God is juſtified, inſtead of us, and dyes when it was our condition; let our hearts not be commonly affected with this myſtery.

2. *Uſe.* This myſtery raiſeth againe from the dead, the hopes and joyes of poor ſoules, and in the midſt of all their ſins, and apprehenſion of wrath, gives the ſtrongeſt ground for Faith in their juſtification. Why was God (or God *in Chriſt*) juſtified, he had no need of ſuch an act in himſelf, no guile was ever found in his mouth, he was a Lambe without ſpot; but all this is to denote what God was for us, that he might be to us: All the acts that were to be done on us, were firſt

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done to God in our Nature, acted on Jeſus Chriſt; and he was but an image of what is to be perſonally done to us; yea, whatever conſideration he paſſed under, it was as in our ſtead, and we are to reckon our ſelves as ſharers with him, yea, as really partakers with him, as if we had acted it in our own perſons. When he dyed, he ſtood under an act of attainder for ſin, he acted nor was capable of none; but only ſtood there for us, and our very ſins, on the Croſſe were crucified with Chriſt, and ſatisfied for by him, as if we had paid the utmoſt farthing with our owne hands; ſo when he was juſtified by the ſpirit, we were juſtified. He was juſtified as a common perſon in the room of all the Elect, as he died as a common perſon for their ſins.

In theſe two expreſſions, you have all the myſtery of Redemption, and the reconciliation of ſinners to God.

1. God was manifeſt in fleſh, to bear our ſins, and to be abaſed and humbled for them, whereby he might ſatisfie himſelfe, and then in the token of acquittance, and abſolution of us from all theſe ſins, he is juſtified in ſpirit, and all the objections of unbeliefe, are anſwered in this. Saith the ſoule, how ſhall my ſins be ſatisfied for? Why God is manifeſt in fleſh for that end, to lay downe an infinite price

price to his juſtice; But how ſhall I know that my ſins are taken away, and that I am juſtified from them; why, that God was juſtified in ſpirit, that is, the ſpirit which ſpeaks nothing but truth, and who knowes all things, did publickly declare that there was a compleat righteouſneſſe obtained for ſinners, and did pronounce it to Chriſt, as in the name of all the Elect.

It is worthy further ſearch into this, what Chriſts being juſtified in the ſpirit, amounts unto, for the comfort of poor ſoules, in regard of their juſtification, that ſo we may all ſee, what full and plenteous redemption there is in Jeſus Chriſt, and what matter of holy triumph we have, in regard of our own juſtification.

Firſt, that Jeſus Chriſt ſhould be juſtified, and that for us, or in our name, as the Atturney takes up the Bond in Court for his Client; it is as good in Law, as if the party himſelfe were there to recieve the verdict, and ſee the act inrolled. And obſerve, it was more for Chriſt to be juſtified, a harder thing then for us, for he had the ſins of the whole world of the Elect upon him, and yet Chriſt beleeved his juſtification; in that former place; *Eſa.* 50. *he is neer that juſtifies me.* Well mayeſt thou beleeve the particular

juſtification of thy perſon, ſeeing Chriſt was juſtified for thee before-hand; he was that great ſurety, that ſtood bound to pay thy debts, and he was publiquely acquitted for thee. And this is certaine, that Chriſt being juſtified at that moment, all the Elect were virtually and really juſtified in him; that act of God which paſs'd on him, was drawne up in the name of all you; and when you beleeve, this Indenture is ſhowne unto your hearts.

But ſecondly, in that he was juſtified in the ſpirit, our comfort is raiſed higher, for it was not an ordinary acquittance which was given Chriſt in our name, but what was drawne up by the ſpirit of truth, who can ſpeak nothing but truth; God himſelfe juſtified himſelfe in our Nature, by his owne ſpirit, ſuch an infallible witneſſe cannot be queſtioned. And though by ſpirit be meant his Godhead in generall; yet it is ſpecially meant of that perſon which is the ſpirit. Therefore the Apoſtle *Iohn*, *Iohn* 1. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. reduceth all to this, *that it was the ſpirit that beares witneſſe to this, that life is in Ieſus Chriſt; Chriſt came by water and blood ſaith he, but Chriſt is the ſpirit that beares witneſſe to this.*

There were two things which did juſtifie Chriſt, and both done by the ſpirit; his reſur-

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rection and aſcenſion into Heaven, in that he roſe againe, it was cleer that he was juſtified, for elſe he could not have riſen, if he had not ſatisfied, the bands of Death would have held him faſt in the Grave; but that he can raiſe from the dead, *he was declared to be the ſon e of God with power, but ſtill by the holy ſpi i, Rom.* 1. 3. And in that, he by the ſpirit was carried up unto his Fathers glory, and ſat downe at the right hand of God. It cleerly d d ſhew, he was accepted and freed by God, from that which was laid on him. Therefore Chriſt ſaith, that this ſhall be one of the great things which the ſpirit ſhall convince the world of, viz. *Of righteouſneſſe, becauſe I go to my Father. Joh.* 16. That is, that there is a compleat righteouſneſſe obtained, and juſtification, or elſe I had never been admitted into my Fathers preſence; and all this acted by the ſpirit.

And as a further evidence of this, as ſoon as ever he was aſcended, he powrs down the ſpirit as as flood on his Apoſtles, and the *S*aints with them, and to demonſtrate, that he was not only accepted in his owne perſon, and he perſonally juſtified in him, and now grace and life muſt neceſſarily run out upon them. In all theſe acts Chriſt was juſtified in the ſpirit for the comfort of beleevers. *Acts* 2, 1, 2. 3, 4, 5.

Now how may your ſoules triumph and rejoyce in your juſtification, in the thoughts of this, that Chriſt, yea God was juſtified for you; and how ever you are in your ſelves, yet you may be juſtified in the ſpirit; beleevers have nothing to doe, but to take out the perſonall aſſurance of this to their owne ſoules; at that time when Chriſt was juſtified, you were vertually ſo; and yet but out of the particular diſcharge by the ſpirit to your hearts, and your juſtification is compleat. The great complaint of ſoules is in this, that they are not juſtified in God's eyes: But now, we are not only acquitted by the ſpirit in our own hearts, but God himſelfe is juſtified in our Nature for us; there is none to offend but God, and none to be juſtified but ſinners. But now, when God ſhall ſatisfie himſelfe, and juſtifie himſelfe in our perſons, or in our ſtead; what ſtrong conſolation have we, God will not lay the payment on us, but himſelfe, and he will juſtifie himſelfe for us.

It was more for Chriſt to be juſtified, then for any one of us, for he had more laid on him, then can be laid on us, he ſtanding not under the charge of one perſons ſins, or many, but of all the Elect; and when he was juſtified, a full diſcharge was given for all that he repreſented. This is a myſtery indeed, God

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is offended, and God takes that on himſelfe in our Nature, which lay on us, and is juſtified for us. When Chriſt was juſtified, there was a publick record of it; and now when we believe, we goe but to that Court, and take out the particular diſcharge to our own ſoules, Chriſt receiv'd the firſt act on himſelfe in our Name, and it was as authentique as if it were formally done on our perſons; But when we believe, it is done perſonally to us. So that now beleevers, you have nothing elſe to doe but apply that righteouſneſſe, which iſſued forth from Chriſt's juſtification, and lay hold on it as your owne: Goe to the Court, and ſee your owne names in the Indenture, and get out the copy of it in your owne heart; for there is a neceſſity, if Chriſt be juſtified, that we ſhould be diſcharged; therefore get holy and glorious triumphs in your heart, over ſin and Death, in that, Chriſt is not only dead, but alive, and that you are juſtified in him; get out the ſpeciall aſſurance of it, by the ſpirit to the hearts.

3 *Uſe.* If Chriſt were juſtified in the ſpirit, Let it be your care to juſtifie Chriſt in your ſpirits. God hath diſcharged him, ſo doe you.

Q. How can we juſtifie Chriſt, you will ſay?

S. Why, when you believe what he hath

done for you; Chriſt hath done all things for you, ſatisfyed wrath, fulfilled the Law; God hath acquitted him, pronounced him juſt, ſaith he is contented, he can deſire no more; why now doe you juſtifie Chriſt in this, by ſaying Amen in your owne Conſciences to this. Hath Chriſt dyed? believe that your ſins ſhall die; Is he juſtified? beleeve that ſo are you. When the ſurety hath paid the debt, the principall as well as the creditor, ought to give an acquittance.

Oh how are we to be blamed for our unbeliefe; what aſperſions doth it caſt on Chriſt, he hath done all things well, but we ſay by unbeliefe, he hath done nothing. Unbeliefe profeſſeth Chriſt is not dead, or at leaſt not riſen; the Law is ſtill in force, juſtice is not ſatisfied, there is no juſtification procured: Every doubt in a Saint, caſts a ſcandall on Chriſt; God ſaw cauſe enough to juſtifie Chriſt, even by his own ſpirit, and to declare him in our names, to be a righteous one, and we in him; but we ſee not cauſe to believe our owne juſtification, or the remiſſion of our ſins; what is it, but to thinke that Chriſt is held under the paines of death, hath not done any thing to purpoſe, that the wrath of God is as open to deſtrov us, as ever it was.

You keep Chriſt as it were in a priſon, and under

under condemnation, when you believe not; Oh ſoules, will not you juſtifie Chriſt in all theſe glorious things he hath done for you.

Then you juſtifie Chriſt, when you acknowledge him to be what he is made of God to you, wiſdome and righteouſneſſe, ſanctification and redemption. I might goe through all his Offices and Acts for us; as then we juſtifie him in regard of his death, when our hearts are ſatisfied with the offering up of himſelfe, and that ſatisfaction he hath made. So in his reſurrection, when we believe we are freed from our ſins, our ſurety being riſen for our juſtification; ſo in regard of the whole worke of ſalvation, we juſtifie Chriſt when we goe to him as a full and compleat Saviour, having our conſcience quieted by his righteouſneſſe, and our hearts triumphing thorough his fulneſſe: Oh it is ſad to ſee how Chriſt is crucified againe in our hearts, thorough unbeliefe, arraigned as a malefactor; for this is certaine, if there be not enough laid in for the ſatisfying and inriching of ſoules, then Chriſt is not righteous, and he is under condemnation: How ſhould we rejoyce to witneſſe to Chriſt faithfulneſſe and righteouſneſſe. When we goe boldly to God by Chriſt, then we acknowledge Chriſt to be a Mediator; when we find the ſenſe of our

juſtification in our owne hearts, then we acquit Chriſt, and declare he was juſtified from our ſins.

SERMON VII.

1 Tim. 3. 16.

Seene of Angels, &c.

GReat myſteries have great admirers; according as things are in themſelves ſo they are adored. Godlineſſe is the greateſt myſtery that ever was, (it being made up of various workings of the glory of God;) and it hath the greateſt and moſt glorious Creatures for to ſtudy it, even the Angels themſelves. This is one of the particulars whereby the Holy Ghoſt ſets forth the greatneſſe of this myſtery, that it was ſeen of Angels. The two former expreſſions ſet forth this myſtery in its nature, and eſſence, under a twofold conſideration of God, as *manifeſted in fleſh*, and *juſtified in ſpirit*: But this

this ſets it out in regard of the outward effect it had on the higheſt Creatures, it was the object of their admiration; not that this is part of the myſtery it ſelfe, but an expreſſion which the Apoſtle puts in, in the midſt of all, to raiſe our thoughts of it, becauſe Angels did look into it, and adore it; that we may therefore open this, we will conſider,

1. What this myſtery was which Angels ſaw.

2. What is meant by this ſight, or how they may be ſaid to ſee it.

3. How it doth magnifie this myſtery.

For the firſt; the myſtery which is here held out as the object of Angels ſight, is none other than Jeſus Chriſt acting as a Mediatour for poore ſinners, concerning whom all theſe expreſſions are; Chriſt being a viſible God in the world, *God manifeſt in fleſh*, a full juſtification for his Elect; all the working of this myſtery was in the perſon of the Lord Jeſus, and he is the ſum and ſubſtance of all, the Apoſtle brings not any thing as a part of this myſtery which was done meerely in God, which lay in his own heart, and were immanent acts of his Nature, ſuch as Election, Predeſtination, and the like; but only of the way or contrivance of this as it was acted in the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt,

who

who was God in our fleſh; all theſe things are included, and implyed in this diſcovery; it is Jeſus Chriſt who is the myſtery that was preſented to the eyes of the Angels as the moſt glorious object for their ſight, God as in our nature dying, and ſatisfying, and being juſtified for poore ſinners, this myſtery was ſeen of Angels; that is,

2. (ὤφθη) *ſeene*, it is not meant of a bare ſight, but of a ſight which aſtoniſhed the underſtanding, and takes up the heart, elſe it had been a poore expreſſion to raiſe the glory of this myſtery, that Angels ſaw it; but it was ſo great and wonderfull, that they tooke the greateſt delight to behold it, it was that which they were raviſhed in beholding, as at ſome new and ſtrange object, as we uſe to ſay of ſome wonderfull apparition, it was ſeen by ſuch and ſuch, that is, they were happy to behold it, exceedingly taken with it; therefore the Apoſtle *Peter*, when he would expreſs the glory of this myſtery, ſaith, the Angels do deſire to looke into them, 1. *Pet.* 1 12. (ἐπιθυμοῦσιν) their whole ſpirits were taken up with this; it was to them as the bleſſedeſt ſight that they could ever behold; ſo that the meaning of this, that he was ſeen of Angels is this, that Jeſus Chriſt, who was to act out the peace and comfort of the Saints, was diſcovered to

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the Angels, and they lookt on him as ſo great a myſtery that they conld not look off, but ſtand and admire it. So when Jeſus Chriſt was borne, there was a heavenly hoſt of Angels praiſing and admiring God for this diſcovery, *Luke* 2. 13, 14 leaping for joy but to bring the news of him to the world, you have no ſuch expreſſions of the joy of all the world beſides, as they tooke but in the ſeeing and manifeſting this great myſtery. But,

3. Well may this be brought in to advance the greatneſſe of this myſtery in our eyes, that it was ſeen of the Angels; Angels who are creatures of the higheſt order, who are of the fineſt make, of the nobleſt ſpirits, who behold the face of God himſelfe, and are taken up with the immediate enjoyments of his fulneſſe; for them to look into this myſtery, as if nothing elſe were worthy of knowledge beſides; as if the face of God himſelfe were not ſo ſweet, nor ſo taking, and ſatisfactory, (excuſe the expreſſion) but they muſt ſee this myſtery as the top of their knowledge, and that which went beyond all their other enjoyments; and which is more, this being a deſigne not ſo principally concerning them, they being in it as a far off, and in generall; but being a myſtery of the ſalvation of ſinners, yet that

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Angels ſhould prefer this to all their ſights, and ſit down viewing this Chriſt before all their own proper happineſſe, how doth it ſwell up the glory of this deſigne? Thus you have the meaning of the words in the generall opened, I ſhall draw up the ſcope of it more particularly in this Doctrine.

Doct. That Jeſus Chriſt in the myſtery of the Goſpell is the object of Angelicall viſion and admiration.

The things of the Goſpell are not common or ſhallow things, but that which the bleſſed Angels have their divine ſpirit taken up in the adorning of. Sight in Scripture is put to expreſſe the inward motions of the affections; *Joh.* 1. 14. *We ſaw his glory as of the only begotten Son of God, &c.* that is, we were taken with him as with God himſelfe. So *Paul* uſeth the ſame expreſſions, *Gal.* 1. *He was ſeene of me alſo*, (ὤφθη κἀμοὶ) ſpeaking of that glorious ſight which he had of him, which converted him, and for ever took his heart with love to him. So here (*ſeen of Angels*) that is, Angels behold the glory of this myſtery, and were taken up with it, as the greateſt joy of their hearts.

For opening this. Seeing the Apoſtle puts ſo much upon it, as to put it in one great expreſſion to open the greatneſſe of the myſtery

myſtery of Godlineſſe; that it was ſeen of Angels, I ſhall propound theſe things to handle.

1. What ſight the Angels have of the myſtery of the Goſpell.

2. How they come to the knowledge of it.

3. That this is a myſtery, that Angels ſhould come to ſee this Chriſt.

4. What is in this myſtery, that ſhould ſo affect them.

For the firſt. Angels being creatures of a ſpirituall Nature, are vaſt in knowledge; they having no bodyes to cloud their apprehenſions, but are *puræ intelligentiæ*, ſee things nakedly, as they lye in themſelves, yet their knowledge is imperfect, being creatures, they know not all things which God knows, though they know all that is made. Now for their ſight of Chriſt in the myſtery of the Goſpell; doubtleſſe they ſee much into it; for they are ſaid to bring the firſt newes of it, to wait on Chriſt in this myſtery, to comfort him in his ſufferings, to adminiſter cordials to him, in theſe fainting fits of his paſſion; they ſate in the Grave to informe the woman and his Diſciples, concerning his Reſurrection; when he aſcends up to Heaven, they come

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to the men of *Iudea* and *Ieruſalem*, and aske them, *why gaze yee here? Chriſt is taken up into Heaven*; and they ſpake further of his ſecond comming; *He ſhall come againe, as you have ſeen him goe up.* So that Angels now know much of the myſtery of Jeſus Chriſt: They which have followed Chriſt from ſtep to ſtep, from the birth to the grave, from the grave to Heaven muſt needs be acquainted much with theſe things, and not only a bare Hiſtoricall knowledge, but a knowledge of the myſtery of it. Only they ſee it not as a myſtery in them. There is the difference of Saints ſight of Chriſt, it is as acting all for them, and as a myſtery within them; but not ſo with Angels, though yet they have ſome concernments in it, for they ſtand by this Chriſt, he is a head to them alſo. But this will be more diſcovered in the ſecond thing.

2. How doe the Angels come to know this myſtery, whether it be naturall to them, as ſuch creatures, or whether it be conveyed to them by ſome other meanes. Some thinke that God did diſcover a modell of this myſtery, and gave a glimps of it to all the Angels, at their firſt creation, and ſhewed them who muſt be their head, and thorough whom he would act all his mind, even Jeſus Chriſt, as in our Nature, which, when the reprobated

Angels

Angels ſaw, they could not indure to come under that myſtery, or ſubmit to Jeſus Chriſt; they liked not the ſight, and ſo fell, and are now Devils for ever; but the Elect Angels (of whom we ſpeak) delighted in the ſight of this myſtery, and ſubmitted to the hint of this diſcovery, and ſo ſtood by Chriſt, and he was made a head to them, and they ſubſiſt ſtill in him. But whether that be ſo or no, this ſeemes to be cleer, that this myſtery in Jeſus Chriſt, Angels had not the knowledge of it by their naturall being, but as thy had it by revelation; for this myſtery the Apoſtle profeſſeth, *Eph.* 3. It was hid in God himſelf, kept ſecret in his owne breaſt, manifeſted to none out of God, before he was pleaſed in time to reveale it; they might ſee ſome probabilities of it, have ſome gueſſes by ſeeing of God's heart, that he was big with ſome rich deſign towards the creatures, but the myſtery was hid in God; what it would be, and in what manner they could not tell, but by revelation, though they ſaw God face to face, yet they could not ſee this myſtery in God's Nature; for it lay in his decrees and counſels, which the Angels know not, and it was a deſign from eternity, before the Angels were acted and contrived in God, yet this muſt be granted, that they had a manifeſtation of Chriſt,

Chriſt, as to that which concerned themſelves as he was their head, and as they ſtood in Heaven by him; but as the tranſactions of it concerned us ſinners with the myſterie of it (which is properly the myſterie of the Goſpell;) they know not but by degrees, as it was acted, and are ſtill capable of increaſe. When God had broken his mind, opened his counſels, in that firſt promiſe made to *Adam*, in renewing of the Covenant with *Abraham*, in the types and ceremonies of the Law, by all the Prophets; ſo they gathered out the meanes of it, and they got more by the birth of Chriſt, by his miniſtry; but there be two great waies, by which Angels come to ſee much of the myſtery of Chriſt in the Goſpell.

1. By ſeeing the perſon of Chriſt.

2. By the Church, and the manifeſtations of Chriſt to them.

For the firſt; beſides what they have ſeen in the action of Chriſt in this world, (formerly ſpoken of) which yet gave them abundance of inſight unto this myſtery; for they firſt preached the Goſpell with joy and gladneſs to the world. *Luk.* 2.

They were the firſt Miniſters of the Goſpell, in the affirmative, that Chriſt was come, they preached more of Chriſt, then all the Prophets did, and with greater joy, they were in a multitude

multitude together, prayſing God, and ſaying, peace on earth, &c.

But beſides that, they now ſeeing Chriſts perſon in Heaven, as glorified, and he being the expreſſe image of the Father, that which expreſſeth all his heart, and opens all his cabinets, upon whom, all the glory of God to man is acted, the Angels cannot, but by beholding Chriſt in this conſideration, know much of the Goſpell from him, Chriſt being the Epitome, and ſumme of this myſterie; but yet,

2. The great knowledge, Angels get in theſe myſteries, is from the Church, from the diſcoveries of Chriſt to the Saints. That place of the Apoſtle, deſerves to be opened to this purpoſe *Eph.* 3. 1. 2. where it is ſaid, that one intent of preaching the Goſpell is, that Principalities and powers, (names given to Angels) might know by the Church, the manifold wiſdome of God. The Apoſtle had before magnified the preaching of Chriſt, as the opening of the greateſt myſterie, that ever was to be revealed, and to ſet it forth, he ſaith, firſt, that it was kept hid from Ages and Generations of men, and hid in God, laid up as the great ſecret of Gods heart,

2. He ſaith, that the Angels come to get

their knowledge of it from the Church; the oppoſition is this, that as it was hid from ages of men, from the beginning of the world, ſo it was alſo hid from the Angels; and as men have the knowledge of it by the preaching of it, ſo have Angels, only the Church hath firſt, they at ſecond hand. The Church is the great ſubject on which all this is to be acted, it is that which concernes them, they are folded up in it, it is a myſtery in them, as none have been privie to the firſt contrivance of this myſtery, but theſe three which bare witneſſe to it, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit; ſo none have the manifeſtations of it, ſo glorious as the Saints who are the ſubjects of it: The manifeſtations and openings of the myſtery of the Goſpell, are not properly in Heaven, but in the Church, therefore the meeting of the Saints are called Heavenly places, becauſe there Chriſt makes his Heaven; and though the Angels ſee the myſtery of it, as Chriſt hath acted it by himſelfe, and in his own perſon; yet they cannot ſee it as it is acted on the hearts of the Saints, which is a new myſtery, therefore it is called a diſcovery of the manifold wiſdome of God; and the apoſtle ſaith, *Col.* 1. 27. That the riches of the glory of this myſtery, is Chriſt in us. There is a depth in this myſtery, and ſuch manifold actings of the

the infinit wiſdome of God, that it is impoſſible for men or Angels to know it all at once. It was ſo vaſt, that God himſelfe was faine to open it by degrees, to act it in parts, by manifold, and divers actings of his wiſdome: And all this to the Church. If a man will know the myſtery of ſuch an Art, he muſt goe to ſchoole where that Art is taught. The great things of Chriſt are taught in the Church, Chriſt reveales that there, which he doth no where elſe; if Angels will ſee into the depth of this myſterie, they muſt goe to ſchool as it were unto the Church. When a company of poor Saints are together, Chriſt ſtands in the midſt of them, comes downe by the ſpirit, makes a throne, brings to light, glories that were prepared for them, before Angels had a being, kept warm, as it were in Gods heart all this while. It is ſaid, in (*1 Cor.* 2.) None knowes the things of God, ſave the ſpirit, he only ſearcheth theſe deep things of God, none excluſively no not Angels. Now the ſpirit is only promiſed to the Church, and hath his offices on purpoſe in relation to the Church, and herein lies the exceeding glory of God, that he will diſcover ſuch a myſtery to his poor creature man, which he will make his higheſt creatures admire.

Thus you ſee how Angels get their know-

ledge by the Church. When Chriſt is preached, and his glory laid forth, and ſoules are taken into it as it were, why Angels come down, and liſten, hold their ſpirituall eares unto the whiſperings of the Spirit in the Goſpell to us; and yet you muſt not underſtand it as if the knowledge they got by the Church were meerly a deduction of concluſions from principles, but when they heare and ſee the Spirit ſpeaking to the Churches, and opening theſe eternall glories of God in Chriſt, they ſee intuitively into it, as we ſee when beames of the Sun on a ſudden breake out on the world, they are exceeding quick, and take it as by revelation; they catch up, as it were, the words that are ſpoken to us, and before they come to our eare they are in their hearts; for they being ſpirits know the meaning of the Spirit as ſoone as ever it is but revealed; neither is it to be underſtood as if they had no knowledge of Chriſt without the Church; for they knew Chriſt before the Church, and preached Chriſt unto them; but it is meant of the degrees and encreaſe of their knowledge in theſe myſteries, the depth of them is laid out before them in the Church; becauſe the myſtery of Chriſt concerned man, it was firſt revealed to him after his fall, though but very darkly, and unto none elſe, and

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ſo now in the diſcovery of it in the perfection of it there be ſome things that God reveals to none, but thoſe who are the ſubjects of it; As we know not the nature of Angels, nor their condition, though we know Chriſt, becauſe it concernes us more peculiarly: neither do Angels know all that Chriſt doth, and will reveale to his Saints. There is in the things of the Goſpell the things themſelves in the generall nature and uſe of them, and the glory, and depth, the myſtery and fulneſſe of them; the firſt Angels knew long ſince that God ſhould come in our fleſh, and procure peace, and that he was juſtified in the ſpirit, and will ſave ſoules; but the depth of this myſtery, the riches of the Glory of it, the ſeverall myſteries contained in it, they doe not know, but as it is opened to them, and that by the Church; for herein God ſhewes, as his prerogative, ſo his diſtinguiſhing love, that ſome choice and bleſſed things of Chriſt, ſhall never be manifeſted out of God's heart, but to the Saints firſt, and none ſhall know them, but by him, in converſe with them. As the myſtery of Chriſt to the Saints, is a peculiar deſign, ſo they ſhall have the peculiar diſcoveries of it, and others by them. And the manner whereby they know things, by the ſpirituall ſpecies, wherein they are manifeſted,

feſted, and by the ſeeing of that glory which ſhines on them in their manifeſtation.

3. This may well be put in as a myſtery among the reſt; that God thus diſcovered, is ſeen of Angels; for it was a new deſign, that was carried on in the moſt unviſibleſt way that could be; It being a myſterie ſo remote from their particular natures, they having no need of ſuch a diſcoverie, and that God ſhould act a thing unknown unto theſe high creatures, not diſcover unto them but at ſecond hand as it were, that the greateſt deſign of God, ſhould be hid from theſe creatures, which lay in his owne boſome as it were, for ſo long a time; this is the myſterie which the expreſſion ſeemes to imply. (*Seene of Angels*) And then when God had acted it, and laid out his glory in it, he preſents it as a ſight of glory to the Angels, that they might ſee and admire at what God had been doing all this while: this comes nigheſt the meaning, God hid it from them, untill he had ſet up Jeſus Chriſt in ſtate and glory, and then ſhewes him in a myſterie to his Angels, that they might fall downe before him, and ſee the unſpeakable wiſdome of God.

To this alludes that phraſe, *Heb.* 1. 6. When he brings in the firſt borne into the world, he ſaith, let all the Angels worſhip him; God

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ſhews the Angels this firſt begotten of his love and wiſdome, and they worſhip him.

As *Nabuchadnezzar*, to ſhew his ſtate and glo y, ſet up an image, that all his Subjects muſt bow downe before: So did the great God make an image of himſelf in Jeſus Chriſt, by whom he acted the greateſt deſignes of his heart, and ſet it before the Angels to adore; but.

4. Let us ſee what this myſterie containes, that it ſhould thus affect the Angels; why, if it were nothing elſe but the manner of its acting, it were enough even to fill them with admiration, that God himſelfe ſhould come and aſſume fleſh, and be one with it, taking the forme of a ſervant, emptying his glory as it were, and making himſelfe of no reputation. This cannot but aſtoniſh the higheſt apprehenſions to do, the very outſide intimates that this is a depth that cannot be ſounded. It is a myſtery of unſearchable riches, *Eph.* 3. In this diſpenſation there are all the riches of the great God contained; It is a way which God hath found out to bring the poore creature into the boſome of all his treaſures.

It is a myſtery in which all the decrees, and purpoſes, and thoughts of the heart of God himſelfe are acted, in which the manifold wiſdome of God is moſt opened, whatever

he hath been acting in all the world hath been but in reference to this, to ſet it forth; the choiſeſt love in the utmoſt act, in the greateſt variety, at the extreameſt diſadvantages, is manifeſted here; and as it hath been a caſting, and contriving in God from eternity, ſo it will be acting to eternity, & there wilbe no end of it, new wonders of glory will be brought forth through it the longer it is look'd into.

And for what concernes their particular, they may well wonder at what God is about in this, when he paſſeth by the moſt glorious of all the creation, and acts out the brighteſt of his glory on poore ſinners, and takes them up to an oneneſſe with himſelfe, and advanceth them with Chriſt far above principalities and powers, when they ſee ſuch a deſigne towards thoſe ſo far below them, and which had never been ſo nigh God as themſelves; when fleſh ſhall be ſet down at Gods right hand, and exalted above all the Glory of the Creation, and by that to let out eternall love, to manifeſt infinite treaſures of glory; and all this over and above, and beſides what God hath to beſtow on them; how can the Angels chooſe but look about them at ſuch a ſight? But no more for the opening of it; we had need now to apply this, and reflect on our ſelves.

Uſe 1, Is to ſhame all our hearts that we

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are no more affected with Chriſt, and the myſteries of the Goſpell; who can ſay that ever they ſaw this myſtery with admiration? it is rather a myſtery in this regard to us, that we ſee little of it that takes our hearts; ſhall Angels ſee this myſtery, and be ſo taken with it, and not we? It concernes not them ſo particularly, they are not wrapt up in it, yet are exceedingly longing for to know it; yea, cannot be content with a bare ſight of it, but pry into it; Oh hearts that the Sons of men have, that magnifie no more this great myſtery! God is come downe among us in a myſtery of mercy, riches, love, glory, wiſdome, come to let out a fulneſſe of all this on our hearts. And this is preached in the Goſpel, & yet who looks into it? how few hearts are but ordinarily taken with it? who ſearcheth into it as to the bleſſedeſt Cabinet in the world? Chriſt is not as much eſteemed as ſwine, it is ſad to ſay it; men reſpect toyes, noti ns, any thing before it; conſider ſinner, doſt thou make little of that which hath taken up the heart of the great God from eternity, on which he hath ſet the higheſt deſigne of his owne glory, which Angels, creatures of ſurpaſſing glory, thinke it their happineſſe but to ſee, as it were, though they enjoy not? Oh how unworthy art thou ever to have a glimpſe of it! Angels

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behold the face of God immediately, want nothing, are filled with immortall glory, yet they come down to the Church to heare the manifeſtations of this myſtery, the openings of this Chriſt: They think they are not happy enough in heaven, but muſt know what Saints enjoy of this Chriſt, as if it were a glory above their attainments. There be two expreſſions to this purpoſe which the Apoſtle makes uſe of in *Peter*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 12. That the Angels deſire to look into the things of the Goſpell; the word for deſire ſignifies the utmoſt coveting, or longing after a thing which a man cannot be without; Chriſt is ſo ſweet and bleſſed an object, and the Goſpell ſo filled with the glory of God, that theſe bleſſed creatures cannot containe without ſeeing of him; their pure ſpirits would faine be in the boſome of them, and leave their heavenly glory but to converſe with Saints about the myſtery of God in Chriſt: So the other word intimateth, they deſire to looke into them, (παρακύψαι) the word ſignifies bowing down, to pry heedfully and narrowly into a thing. It is uſed from the Diſciples ſtooping down and looking into Chriſts Sepulchre, *Joh.* 20 (παρακύψαι βλέπει) the poore diſciples did not more heedfully look into Chriſts grave, to behold their Saviour,

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than Angels do to ſee Chriſt in the Goſpell. So you have it typified of them, *Exod.* 25. the Cherubims were made looking down towards the mercy-ſeat, ſhewing how Angels ſhould deſire to peepe into Chriſts heart, where the ſeat of mercy is, as if they longed to have one glimpſe on them; Oh bluſh you hearts which have made ſo light of the concernments of the Goſpell!

Uſe 2. How happy are you who have had under the Goſpell any manifeſtations of Chriſt, any diſcovery of this myſtery to your hearts; bleſſed are your eyes for they ſee, and your eares for they heare; you have ſeen that which never eye ſaw which is naturall, and what the pureſt ſpirits ſee and wonder at; Angels envy not your happineſſe, but they vaile to your glory, they are not your corrivals but admirers; you have theſe ſights laid before you, that Angels would leave their habitations above but to ſee; ſuch dainties ſpread before you to eat, which Angels every day long for; certainly Saints are kept very high, that theſe bleſſed ſpirits long to feed with them, the leavings of your enjoyments they take up. Oh hath God diſcovered his love to thee in Chriſt, given thee a ſight of his face in Chriſt, juſtified and ſanctified thee in him; he hath done that for thee that Angels wonder at;

at; know thy own happineſſe, pry into thy priviledges: And if thou canſt not wonder enough thy ſelfe, take in Angels to bleſſe, and praiſe, and admire with thee, they deſire no better employment; theſe celeſtiall, Seraphicall ſpirits love to ſing the tune of the Goſpell moſt, they do ſervice to the Church, adminiſter to them, and all their waies, as it were, is to heare ſomething of Chriſt among, and to know more of this myſtery by them.

Uſe 3 Let your whole hearts be laid out in the ſtudying of the myſteries of the Goſpell, there muſt needs be ſome rich jewels in it of unſpeakable worth, that God makes Angels to dig for, and above all things labour to ſee the *myſtery*; content not thy ſelfe with any bare Hiſtoricall knowledge, or outward apprehenſions of it, but ſtrive to be in the boſome of the injoyments of them, and let no ſight ſatisfie thee, but what is raiſing and aſtoniſhing thy heart; this ſets out the worth of Chriſt, that he was ſeen of Angels; what, barely preſented to their ſight; no, they ſaw him with delight, with joy, they were rapt up above themſelves, to ſee ſuch a glorious object.

Conſider it is a myſtery, wherein your happineſſe is included, your joyes, and comforts, and all your concernments lie in it as in

ſo many folds. All the wiſdome and love of God is laid out in reference to the making of you happie; the Angels are but in it ſecondarily, as Chriſt is their head, that benefit they get by it, which is a high advancement, but Chriſts heart is particularly opened to you, and all his riches made over to you; and if you will not get to ſee much of Chriſt for your ſelves, to adde to your own joy, why get Chriſt opened to you, for the Angels ſake, that they may know more of Chriſt by thee.

SERMON VIII.

1 Tim. 3. 16.

Preached unto the Gentiles, &c.

YOu have heard of the *myſtery of Godlineſſe* in the former particulars, in the inward nature of it, as it is acted in the perſon of Chriſt, and

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ſeen and admired by the Angels, you ſhall heare it, in regard of the outward manifeſtation of it to the world, As it was *preached to the Gentiles.* God would have all the creatures adore this myſtery; therefore firſt, he preſents it to the Angels, diſcovers the perſon of Chriſt to them, they indeed were the fitteſt creatures to dive into it, and be taken with it; but it is not only ſeen by them, but it is *preached unto the Gentiles,* diſcovered to the whole world, and this is the myſtery that the New Teſtament is filled with, and that God would have took up all the time of the world to preach it in all Nations. Full hearts long for vent, and cannot hold, but muſt open themſelves every where. God's heart is full of myſteries of love and ſalvation, and he cannot keep it in, but firſt he muſt ſhew it to the Angels, ſee how they would be taken with it, and muſt have it even *preached to the Gentiles* alſo, that they might be taken up into it; and this is alſo a part of the myſterie, that God ſhould let Angels ſee it and preach it abroad to *Gentiles.*

Yet obſerve the difference, it was but ſeen of Angels, they had but a glimpſe of it, it was diſcovered to them, to raiſe their admiration, but not as a myſtery properly for them; but it was *preached to the Gentiles,* proclaimed to them,

them, as if God meant to open his whole mind only to them. Preaching being a ſet way of diſcovery of a mans mind, the great and ſet way, its manifeſtation was not to be unto any, but the *Gentiles*: This did ſwell up the glory of it, in the former expreſſion, that it was a ſight that the Angels were taken with, worthy to be preſented to them, yea, and as that which was beyond all their attainments; what wiſe men and great men are taken up with the ſtudy of, and ſtand gazing on, we judge to be ſome ſtrange and prodigious ſight; they uſe not to lay out their thoughts on common things, or caſt their eyes ſlightlie on everie thing, ſee what the Angels, theſe glorified, and metaphyſicall ſpirits ſhall look on with aſtoniſhment, and long to ſee, muſt needs be ſome ſupercæleſtiall glory, a myſterie of the greateſt depth and fulneſſe; But this is farther, that this myſterie ſhould be preached unto the Nations of the world, that God ſhould make the great declaration of it to ſuch creatures, as a myſterie for them.

This the Apoſtle may well call a great myſtery; the ſumme of it is this; That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as *God manifeſt in the fleſh*, and juſtified in the ſpirit, and admired by Angels, ſhould be preached to ſinfull creatures, and open himſelfe unto them in the working of

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his love and righteouſneſſe: this is one of the great myſteries of *Godlineſſe*.

Here be two things in this one ſentence, that make it a myſterie indeed.

1. That Chriſt ſhould be preached, that Chriſt ſhould take ſuch a way for the manifeſting of the myſteries of his glorie which is ſo unapt and weak to doe it.

2. To whom he is to be preached, not to Angels, not to pure and ſpirituall ſoules, but to the Gentiles, that is, either firſt ſinners in generall, the *Gentiles* being the great ſinners of the world; but eſpecially to the *Gentiles*, in diſtinction from the *Jewes*, the *Gentiles* being the out-caſt of the world: this is the proper meaning of the word here, though the other is comprehended in it; both theſe have a great emphaſis; the Goſpell hath but few words in it, but vaſt of matter, and fulneſs of emphaſis in the expreſſion.

I ſhall open them both, and ſet out the myſtery in them.

Firſt, That Chriſt ſhould be preached (εὐαγγελίζεσθαι) manifeſt this *myſtery* in a greater *myſtery*, diſcover inviſible glory, by outward expreſſions, the riches of his love and life ſhould come out of the mouths of ſinfull creatures; as it was to be manifeſted to ſinners, ſo even by theſe that were ſinners, them-

themſelves, to have this treaſure in earthen veſſels, the way it ſelfe is a *myſtery*. So the Apoſtle (1 *Cor.* 1. 21.) after that the world by wiſdome knew not God, that is, by all their parts and learning, which they accounted the greateſt wiſdome, yet all could not bring them to know God: It pleaſed God by the fooliſhneſſe of preaching, to ſave them which believe. It was a fooliſh way, and that not only becauſe the world accounts it ſo, but becauſe in it ſelfe it was a weak and unſuitable way to ſave ſoules by, that by the breath of a mortall man, he would break hearts, and breathe in life, make ſoules believe, and build them up to heaven, by earth to convey heaven; for one by the outward expreſſion of words, to ſet forth inward glorie, is but as if one would write in Characters for plainneſſe; ſpeak a mans mind in Hieroglyphicks. Now, that all the things of Heaven ſhould be opened in ſuch a dark and weak way, adds to the myſterie. God might only have ſhin'd out the glory and opened the nature of Chriſt, purely and ſilently by his ſpirit, and then it would be no myſtery to conceive how things are manifeſted, but that he will have the ſpirit reveale them in outward expreſſions, thorough the mouths of the ſinners, to whom it muſt be revealed; this is a myſtery of it ſelfe: if a

man ſpeak a plaine ſentence in an unknown tongue, he ſpeaks a myſterie, ſo ſaith the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 14. he that ſpeaks in an unknown tongue, is as a *Barbarian* to me, and I to him; juſt ſo it is here, for Chriſt a Heavenly man to be expreſt in words and writings, and God who is not to be ſeen by any creature, ſeen in ſuch and ſuch words; it may well be put in the ranck of theſe great myſteries; if God had made uſe of Angels, as he did at Chriſts birth, to preach theſe things, it had not been ſo much, they might have come in ſtate, and proclaimed Salvation to the ſonnes of men, have brought downe the glory of Chriſt unto our eyes; and if Chriſt himſelfe had come in his glorified body, accompanied with Angels, as he ſhall at the laſt day, ſuch a way would not have been myſterious; but for Chriſt to be preached by poor men, to make that an inſtrument of the richeſt diſcoverie, and to make words to convey life, and our tongues to ſpeak Chriſt into mens hearts, is a myſterie indeed.

Againe; That Chriſt ſhould be preached, that is, firſt an open way, it is the proclamation of a thing, what is preached is known of all, Chriſt would not have his mind hid, but preached to all the world, he would have every ſoule take notice of his love, and of his glory; he

he proclaimes it as on the houſe top; he would have the great myſtery of the Goſpell preached to all; let all the world know he hath a deſigne of ſalvation on them; ſo Chriſt gave in commiſſion to his Apoſtles, *Mat.* 28. when he ſent them abroad to preach; go preach the Goſpell to every creature, except none; I will have them all to know that life and immortality is brought to light. Chriſt is a generall good, and therefore is preached to all; he would not have the things of heaven be whiſpered in the eare of ſome ſelect ſoules, but preached as on the houſe top, that if all the world will, they may heare with their own eares the voice of the Lord Jeſus, as from heaven, ſpeaking myſteries.

2. It is a ſolemne way, as it is publique, ſo it is ſerious; that Chriſt is to be preached; It is to be the great work of Miniſters to lay him out; the things of the Goſpel are to be preached with the greateſt ſolemnity that can be: Preaching is nothing elſe but men ſpeaking Gods mind in their own language.

2. But that which doth indeed make it ſo great a myſtery, is, that Chriſt is preached to the Gentiles; the word (ἔθνοι) is uſed promiſcuouſly, ſometimes for to expreſſe ſinners in generall, ſometimes properly, for all the world in diſtinction from the Jews, of the Jew

firſt, and alſo of the Gentile: theſe two names comprehending the whole world, I ſhall open them both, whereby you may ſee what a great myſtery it is, that Chriſt ſhould be preached to the Gentiles; that is,

1. To ſinners, that the great diſcovery of this Chriſt, who is ſo glorious, ſhould be preached and proclaimed to Gentiles, the worſt of creatures in regard of ſin. So the name Gentile is put to expreſs all kind of ſinners; therefore the Apoſtle when he would expreſſe the condition of the Gentiles, he cals them ſinners of the Gentiles, becauſe the Gentiles walk'd in nothing but ſin, knew not God, *Gal.* 1.15. So when the Apoſtle would aggravate the fornication of the *Corinthians*, 1 *Cor.* 5. 12. he ſaith there was ſuch fornication among them as was not named, (ἐν ἔθνεσιν) among the Gentiles, that is, among the worſt and moſt notorious ſinners, ſuch as the Gentiles were: Yet this Chriſt, and all the myſtery in him, is to be preached unto ſinners, not to Angels but Gentiles. That God ſhould ever have a thought of goodwil to ſuch, is above all our apprehenſions, God being ſo infinitely diſpleaſed with them; but that he ſhould make ſinners the ſubjects of the utmoſt diſcovery of all this glory, terminate and center as it were his heart in them, and let them

them know that which Angels admire and long to know, this makes up a myſtery of it ſelfe: for God to make a throne, and ſet himſelfe up in the fulneſſe of glory, to preach and proclaime his own riches to ſome pure and unſpotted ſoules, whoſe hearts might preſently fall down before it, this were ſomething ſutable; but that ſinners, who are the children of wrath, ſhould be this deſigne; all this myſtery is to be preached to them as a myſtery, to be acted only towards them.

Oh how much glory is in this! God is here preaching life, and reconciliation, redemption, glorification, and laying out himſelfe in waies of wiſdome, righteouſneſſe to the worſt of ſinners; nay, which is more, God in this myſtery is preached as the peace, the life, the righteouſneſſe, the propitiation for poore ſinners; what is this but the myſtery of free grace acted in infinite wiſdome and love to ſuch ſoules. The Apoſtle when he doth but thinke of it he cannot hold, *this is a faithfull ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Chriſt came to ſave ſinners, of whom I am the chiefe*, ſaith he, 1 *Tim.* 1.

But ſecondly, as to ſinners in generall, ſo to the Gentiles; the whole world beſides the Jews; this is the proper meaning of it, reſpecting the calling in of the Gentiles by

preaching, and rejecting the Jews; This the Apoſtle alwaies makes a great myſterie; the Apoſtle tels the *Coloſſians*, *Col.* 1. 27. that Gods great intent was to make known the riches of the glory of the myſtery among the Gentiles. It was a myſtery that this ſhould not be preached to the Angels, but to ſinners; but herein is a further myſterie, that it ſhould be preached to the Gentiles, not the Jews. The Jewes were owned by God as his own people, he pick'd them out from the whole world, put the viſible ſtampe of his glory on them, ſeemed not to care for the whole world, but they, let them ſinke or ſwim, they had the Oracles of God among them, the Covenant, Promiſes, Gods Preſence; But the poore Gentiles, out-caſts, for ſome thouſands of yeares left of God in blindneſſe and darkneſſe to ſerve Devils and their own luſts, not a ſmile of God on them; yet for the Jews to be caſt off, have ſcarce a glimpſe of this myſterie, but thoſe Gentiles to be called to the riches of the myſterie, and have preached among them, the Jews had the firſt offer and refuſe of the Goſpell, but they ſoone diſcharged it; and now for God to leave his darling people, and let them have but the out-ſides of the Goſpell, the ſhadows of it in Types and Ceremonies, and the offer of the ſubſtance of

it but in groſſe as it were; and for God to preach this Chriſt among the Gentiles, theſe whom the Jews abominated as ſinners, ſtrangers from the Common-wealth of *Iſrael*, and without God in the world, that theſe ſhould be brought under the diſpenſation of the rich and precious myſterie of the Goſpell, may well be put in to greaten the myſterie of Godlineſſe. The Apoſtle in *Eph.* 3. when he would magnifie his Office in the Miniſtery, puts in theſe, that he was ſent to preach to the Gentiles, as the higheſt favour and glory that could be; for he ſaith in *verſe* 2. that he had it by revelation: and he cals it a myſterie, and a myſterie of Chriſt, and a myſtery which in our ages was not made know nunto the Sons of men; and he ſaith, it is now only made known by the ſpirit; what is that which all this is ſpoken of?

That the Gentiles ſhould be fellow-heires, and of the ſame bodie, partakers of his promiſe in Chriſt by the Goſpell, *v.* 6. That ever ſuch a blind, miſerable, forlorn people, among whom the devils ruled from the beginning of the world, that they ſhould have the promiſe of Chriſt made to them, and be fellow-heires with the Jews, this is a myſterie that the Apoſtle boaſts of that he is ſent to preach it, and therefore he goes on, as one that could not containe, *ver.* 8. *To me who*

am leſſe than the leaſt of all Saints is this grace given, that I ſhould preach among the Gentiles the unſearchable riches of Chriſt; (*Among the Gentiles*) there he laies the ſtrength of the priviledge; as if he had ſaid, that I ſhould be ſent to open the myſterie of heaven to ſuch a ſtupid and blind people, to preach the riches of Chriſt to theſe poore Gentiles, this is a diſpenſation, and a grace indeed. So in another place, *Foraſmuch as I am the Apoſtle of the Gentiles I magnifie my Office*, Rom. 11. 13. This muſt needs be a great myſterie that the Apoſtle thought it ſo high an honour, and ſuch a peculiar grace given him, that he ſhould but preach unto Gentiles; And in another place, the Apoſtle ſpeaking of the manner of his call to this worke, he ſaith, *Gal.* 2. 8. that the ſpirit of God was mighty in him towards the Gentiles, it was a mighty and great worke, and the Apoſtle was mightily, and with exceeding actings of powers moved to it.

This was a new deſigne, never expected to be acted, that God ſhould in the latter end of the world cauſe the Sun to come into that part of the Zodiack it never was, after it had run its courſe three thouſand yeares, to make a noone-day in the remote and darke places of the world, and leave the habitable parts of it; that Chriſt ſhould at laſt be preached in the

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fulleſt riches of his glory to thoſe who had not a benigne aſpect of his face in ſuch a time. Many generations of them went down to hell in multitudes, in droves, not knowing God or Chriſt; never dreaming of a Saviour, and now for the Lord Jeſus to come and ſet up his throne among them, open the moſt precious Cabinets of his love and riches to theſe poore creatures, here is a myſterie indeed. It was propheſied of Jeſus Chriſt, and put down as one of the bleſſedeſt ends of his comming, wherein he ſhould be moſt glorious, *He ſhall be a light to the Gentiles, Eſa.* 42. 6. Herein lay the glory of Jeſus Chriſt in the Goſpell, that he ſhould be ſet up as a Sun to enlighten the darkeſt part of the world. Nay, yet further, none ever thought that Chriſt ſhould have been preached to them; for when he firſt called his Diſciples, ſent them abroad to preach, and gave them a Commiſſion to go into every City and preach peace, *Mat.* 10. 5. He makes a particular exception, and gives a ſpeciall charge, *Go not into the way of the Gentiles*; as if he had ſaid, Go any where but among them, there is no peace to be ſpoken to them, as they have been miſerable, ſo they ſhall be. And yet at laſt for the richeſt diſcoveries of peace and love to be made to them, Chriſt preached only to them, this is the myſterie,

ſtery, thoſe which were no people to be made a people; for God to be found of thoſe which ſought him not, is a wonder.

This is that paradox by which the Apoſtle aggravates the Jewes condition; *Rom.* 9. 30, 31. *What ſhall we ſay then, that the Gentiles which followed not after righteouſneſſe have attained unto righteouſneſſe, yea, even the beſt righteouſneſſe, that which is of faith: But Iſrael which followed after the Law of righteouſneſs hath not obtained it.* The Gentiles they never ſought after righteouſneſſe, they never minded ſuch a thing, yet obtained it; Chriſt came to be a righteouſneſſe to them, and left the Jewes, who fought to be righteous by their owne workes and endeavours without righteouſneſſe. The newneſſe and ſtrangeneſſe of this, that Chriſt ſhould be preached to the Gentiles equall with the Jewes, and be brought into the ſame priviledges, and of the ſame body, was that which ſtumbled the Jewes, even againſt Chriſt himſelfe, they thought it could not be poſſible that ſuch a generation ſhould ever be looked on by God, or ever taken into Covenant with him. The Apoſtle when he doth but think of the greatneſſe of this myſterie, that Chriſt ſhould be preached to the Gentiles, and the Jewes caſt off, cries out, *Oh the depth of the riches both of the*

the Wiſdome and Counſell of God, how unſearchable are his judgements, &c. *Rom.* 11. 33. As if he had ſaid, here is a contrivance of wiſdome, and a depth of mercy and love indeed, that God hath ſhak'd off his old friends, and taken in ſtrangers, to be teachers of all his riches.

Thus you have the ſumme of what this ſentence holds forth, and the opening of a great myſterie; the Goſpell, which opens the myſterie of God, is in it ſelfe a myſterie, in regard of the manner and object of its manifeſtation. The former two expreſſions hold forth what the myſtery is, with the glory of it; this is the way of the manifeſtation of it with the perſons, to whom, it is by preaching, and unto the *Gentiles*; and this likewiſe goes to make up the greatneſſe of the myſtery it ſelfe. But I ſhall rather make uſe of it, then open it further.

1 *Uſe.* If this be ſo, it may informe us, firſt, how open the heart of God is towards us; he cannot containe his love and grace within himſelfe, it is ſo vaſt and ardent, he cannot keep his own counſels that are for our good, but muſt manifeſt it to us, and that in the openeſt way, preached and proclaimed, all the myſteries of the Goſpell, though there be ſo much of the glory of God in them, yet they

they are not hid, Chriſt is laid out to open view. God keeps nothing hid, he will have it preached, let every poor ſoule know this, that though all the things in the Goſpell be ſecrets in themſelves, yet he will have them opened, he is not ſhie of ſpeaking any thing, which may be for your good: Heaven is opened, God's heart is proclaimed to ſinners. Thus light and immortality is brought to light by the Goſpell, God hath ſet all his glory out in the light, that men may ſee how they like them, what they are worth, none ſhall be coſen'd with Chriſt, they are brought to light, Heaven is brought home to your owne doors, you need not goe out to ſeek righteouſneſſe, it is brought to you, peace Preached to every houſe. Chriſt will have nothing of his love kept backe, he will have all known what he is, and what he hath done; goe *preach the Goſpell to every Nation*, except none, and preach not only this and that, but preach the Goſpell; what ever may bring joy and gladneſſe to poor ſoules; go to them. Chriſt preached to the *Gentiles*, what is it but this, that he would have all his glorie laid out before them? Oh Brethren, how cheap are the myſteries of the Goſpell! you may have them for taking, you may know them, if you will lend an eare to them; the word

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is nigh thee, even in thy mouth; Chriſt is proclaim'd in the ſtreets. Oh what love is in this, that God ſhould manifeſt Chriſt and his deepeſt myſteries to us, by ſuch a familiar and ſweet way! to tell his mind to us, by ſuch a courſe medium! open his heart to us! by our own mouths, it doth manifeſtly demonſtrate to us, how willing he is, that we ſhould know all his heart. Let me therefore exhort you, to come and buy milke without money, Chriſt is laid open for every mans good, he is for every mans pennie; Chriſt deales not underhand with you, you ſhall ſee what you buy, he is not ſhie nor cloſe in his ſpirit, but is preached to you. What doth the Goſpell ſay? but here is Chriſt, as wiſdome, righteouſneſſe, &c. Take him, and doe what you will with him: Preaching is but a declaring this, that life and light is in Chriſt for you, that eternal love waits for you; that what ever may do you good is provided for you. Oh will ſoules now refuſe Chriſt, when he is brought to their very eares, they may heare him ſpeak of his riches, and glorie, and love to them: Oh neglect not ſo great ſalvation.

2. It informes us, what is the worke of Miniſters, to preach Chriſt to open the myſterie of the Goſpell, to ſinners; what ever

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men preach beſides Chriſt, is but by the bie the great duty is to lay out Chriſt. Miniſter muſt draw out Chriſts blood freely; let the Goſpell be preached as it is diſcovered, without any limitation of mercie and love, without any exception of ſoules from Chriſt.

3. It informes us, to whom Chriſt muſt be preached, unto ſinners, not only Saints, but ſinners; unto *Gentiles*, who were the worſt of ſinners. Chriſt muſt be laid out before the eies of ſinners, offered to ſinners, as ſinners, in their loweſt condition, notwithſtanding all their vileneſſe.

But it may be ſome may ſtumble at this, therefore I would cleer it up, that ſinners are the proper ſubject, to whom the Goſpell muſt be preached, without any qualification, but beleeving and laying hold upon Jeſus Chriſt. Chriſt is to be firſt offered unto ſinners, under no other conſideration but as ſinners; when it is ſaid here, that this myſterie was preached to the *Gentiles*, what is the meaning of it, but life and ſalvation was preached, that is, offered to them.

Chriſt muſt be preached according to the end and intent of his death, and of his offices; now Chriſt dyed for ſinners, for the ungodly, he came on purpoſe to ſave ſinners, therefore he muſt be offered firſt to ſinners, as ſuch as

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he ſuffered for. He dyed not for ſuch and ſuch ſinners ſo humbled, ſo qualified, but for ſinners abſolutely to take away their ſin. When we preach Chriſt, what doe we declare but Chriſt as dead, and riſen againe, for life to ſinners.

And the truth is, men are capable of the Goſpell, under no other notion but as ſinners; for it offers rightouſneſs and free juſtification, reconciliation and redemption, which reſpects purely ſinners; none need Chriſt but only ſuch, a righteous Chriſt is for a ſinful creature.

When Jeſus Chriſt comes to any ſoul, he finds him ungodly, and yet juſtifies him; though ſtill this is to be taken in, though Chriſt be to be preached unto ſinners, yet none but ſuch and ſuch ſinners doe receive him, or beleeve upon him, whoſe hearts he moves, and makes ſee the need of him; though Chriſt belongs to ſinners, and came into the world on purpoſe to ſave them, yet theſe ſinners which he doth ſave, he convinceth and humbleth, and makes beleeve; yet we muſt preach Chriſt, according to the true intent, and proper end of Chriſts miſſion and commiſſion, which was to ſave ſinners, and if men beleeve not, and are not ſenſible of their need, and want of Chriſt, we muſt ſhake off the duſt of our feet.

2. *Uſe.*

2. *Vſe.* If this be ſo, then let no ſinne diſcourage thee from beleeving, and going to Chriſt, Chriſt is given to thee, on no other termes, then as thou art a ſinner, and he a Saviour; let thy condition be what it will, it cannot be worſe then the *Gentiles* was: what if thou haſt lived long in ſin, haſt been a ſtranger from God, yea, worſhipt the very Devils as they did? Chriſt and all the myſterie of the Goſpell is to be preached to thee, and if preached, thou mayeſt beleeve. Let all the world know, that grace is not circumſcribed, that Chriſt is not daintie of his love. We are commanded to proclaime peace, even to thoſe which are afar off, even curſed *Gentils*. Oh except not your ſelves out of the termes of the Goſpell, when the worſt of ſinners may come and be welcome to the richeſt things of Jeſus Chriſt, yea, to drinke of Chriſt's owne heart blood. What a ſad thing is this, that thou ſhouldeſt be more ſhie of Chriſt, then he of thee; what is Chriſt but a Saviour? for whom hath he done all for, but for ſinners, ſuch as thou art? ſuppoſe but any righteouſneſſe in thy ſelfe, or any thing but ſinne, and thou layeſt a ground-worke of deſtroying the end of Chriſt's comming: If thou haſt no ſinne, God hath done nothing for thee; if ſinne hinder thee from Chriſt, it is, becauſe thou

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knoweſt not what Chriſt is made for thee. We can doe no more then preach Chriſt to the *Gentiles*, offer him as a full and compleat Saviour for ſinners, and if you being ſinners, keep you from Chriſt, it muſt be, becauſe you thinke not Chriſt to be a Saviour. We have commiſſion, not to over-heat Chriſt's blood, but give it to ſoules, as they can take it; and I here profeſſe this day, that if thou be a *Gentile*, the verieſt wretch that ever the world bore, Chriſt is preached unto thee, and thou art one, who mayeſt have all the myſterie of the Goſpell diſcovered to thee. Stand not mincing of the Goſpell, make not criticall exceptions againſt Jeſus Chriſt; it is ſufficient thou art a ſinner, thou needſt adde no more ſins; and if thou be a ſinner, Chriſt is offered unto thee. I, this myſtery is a deſign of free grace, and knows no other objects to act upon but ſuch as thou art. Oh lye at Chriſts feet, lay thy eare at the mouth of the Goſpell, it ſpeakes nothing but myſteries of love and life to thee.

Laſtly, If it be ſo, here is a new object for your admiration; that God ſhould contrive ſuch a myſterie, and manifeſt it unto us, that we, we wretched ones ſhould be the ſubjects of ſuch tranſactions, what reaſon have we to bleſſe and admire the love of God to us. Free

grace hath no bounds: It hath only wrought in Gods heart, but it breakes out to all the world, ſtands up and cries, grace, grace to all the world; how ought we to prize the preaching of the Goſpell, which is a revelation of the myſtery of Chriſt to us; God could have revealed all this immediately to his Elect, and have made no more ado; but he will have it preached, this ſhall be the ordinary and common way of the manifeſtation of the great myſteries of the Goſpell, and thoſe which caſt off preaching renounce the way of God, whereby he will open his hidden treaſures.

Oh brethren! thinke what cauſe you have to admire that Chriſt is preached to you, his love manifeſted in ſuch a way; you have Chriſt taught in your ſtreets, the ſweet ſound of the Goſpell in your eares; what ſhould take up your hearts but this? What better newes unto ſinners than to hear of a Saviour? The Goſpell ſpeakes nothing but glad tidings to poore ſoules; it gives out the ſpirits of life and immortality to refreſh the ſoule. You that were Gentiles, Chriſt is preached to you, beleeve, and cloſe in the Goſpell; leſt it happen to you as to the Jews, that Chriſt be preached no more to you; when Chriſt declares ſuch great things, he looks for attendance, and woe to thoſe ſoules that obey not ſuch a Goſpell.

SER.

SERMON IX.

1 Tim. 3. 16.

Beleeved on in the world, &c.

THe *myſtery of Godlineſſe* is comprehended in two things: Gods actings towards us, and our actings towards God; of the firſt you have heard in the former expreſſions, how richly and ſutably God hath diſcovered himſelfe to the ſalvation of his poore creature, man; God himſelfe perſonates us in our condition, and ſo tranſacts our happineſſe, and that we might have the comfort of it, proclaimes it by preaching, even unto the Gentiles, the moſt forlorne and contemptibleſt ſoules, and this is the right line in which the greatneſſe of this myſtery is conveyed; for that it was ſeen of Angels, is but collaterall to it, to make up the glory of it *ab*

extra, from the admiration of ſuch divine creatures, when they did but look on it; but yet his myſtery goes on ſtill in its greatneſſe, even in regard of our actings towards it; and this is put in among the reſt, to fill it up, that it was *beleeved on in the world*; the receiving of Jeſus Chriſt, and beleeving on him, as the Auther of life and ſalvation, and the righteouſneſſe, and redemption of poor ſinners, is one part of the great *myſtery of Godlineſſe*, and that which is as much to be admired as any of the reſt.

Let us firſt looke on it, in relation to the other parts of this myſterie, then conſider it in it ſelfe.

Firſt, conſider it as with the reſt, and it is one of the greateſt parts of the myſtery; for the acting and contriving of this in God's owne heart, he had no oppoſition, all was done in light and glory; but when it was acted on us, there was the oppoſition, light and darkeneſſe ſtriving together; yet one would think this ſhould be no myſtery at all, for us to beleeve this which was ſo much for our own eternall good. Who will wonder at a ſtarved begger, to take bread that is offered him? or for a poor priſoner condemned, to take a pardon? all the wonder is, that the man ſhould be ſo bountifull, as to part with the bread out

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of his own belly, to give the begger, and that the King ſhould be ſo gracious, as to grant the pardon to ſuch a wretch; yet the Holy Ghoſt ſets this downe as an equall myſtery with the reſt, that Chriſt ſhould be beleeved on in the world, which is no more, but that ſinners ſhould receive and entertaine that glory, which is let downe from Heaven, to bleſſe them withall, to lay hold on that Rock, without which, they are drowned for ever; to accept of that grace, which only can bring ſalvation to them, to give up themſelves to be ſaved by the infinite riches of love and glory; yet this is a myſterie, that ever this Chriſt ſhould be thus beleeved on. That God ſhould be manifeſt in fleſh, to ſave ſuch ſinners as we are, why his own infinite love prompted him to it, he had a deſign of glory out of it, he knew what he did, it was an eſſay of acting out his wiſdome and love, and that he was ſeen of Angels; ſuch ſagacious and ſpirituall creatures, is not ſo much wonder, for who was fit to behold ſuch an object, but ſuch bleſſed ſpirits, and that it ſhould be preached to the *Gentiles*, may yet be conceived: For, God to proclaime it to us, and open his heart, was exceeding glorious, yet ſtill this was God letting out his owne love to us; but that ſinners, who lie in darkeneſſe, know nothing

of God, ſhould beleeve this; this is yet a farther myſterie, and as great as any of the others.

But to open it more fully, that we may ſee wherein this myſterie lies in this expreſſion, I ſhall lay downe theſe particulars;

It will be a myſtery if you conſider,

1. The condition which the world is in.

2. The nature of beleeving.

3. The difficulties, and diſadvantages, to the worke of beleeving.

4. The requiſites to ſuch an act.

For the firſt. That Chriſt ſhould be beleeved on in the world; by the world is meant the *Gentiles*, unto whom Chriſt was to be preached. Now, the whole world lay in wickedneſſe, averſe from God, ſcorning the name of Chriſt; the condition of the world was a condition of utter darkeneſſe, they were given up to blindneſſe, and hardneſſe of heart, they walked in the valiy of the ſhadow of death, under the power of the Devill, ruling in their hearts, as children of diſobedience, dead in treſpaſſes and ſinnes, *Eph.* 2. 1,2,3. What a wonder is it, for blind men to ſee, though it be the beſt thing which may doe them good; for dead men to be ſenſible of a miſerable condition, or of any thing that

that lies upon them; such were all the world, running with full careere to sin, and Hell, and will not be stopt, delighting in sin as their meat and drinke, serving their lust and the Devill as their God; men not only not sensible of their owne estate, but hating the name of that which may reforme them: Now, for such to receive and entertain a Christ, submit to the glory of the Gospell, must needs be a mysterie: how such blind soules can see the light of the glory of God, such dead hearts entertaine joyfully a living Christ, and be brought from death to life, from the power of Satan to God, be transformed into light and life, be taken up into glory, may well be put on the account of the mysteries of the Gospell, and adde to its greatnesse.

But 2. What is meant by beleeving? in generall here Faith is put for all graces, and all the glorious workings of God in our hearts, beleeving being the first and the choicest grace, every grace in our hearts makes up a mysterie; and beleeving here comprehends all the workings of our hearts, in relation to the designe of God in the Gospell, as the manifestation of God in flesh, and his justification in spirit, is put for all the worke of redemption and justification, the foundation of it being surely laid in that, so all the workings of

it in our hearts, is ſummed up in beleeving: How our hearts ſhould take in all this love, and be turned into it, and live in it; this is a myſterie indeed; but eſpecially, beleeving is to be taken properly for the Faith it ſelfe, which is nothing elſe, but a cloſing with, a receiving of, and laying hold on Jeſus Chriſt; now if you look into the nature of this Faith, you will find it a myſterie, that Chriſt ſhould be beleeved on in the world.

1. A renunciation of ſelfe.

2. A reall and full cloſing with Jeſus Chriſt.

3. It is a receiving Chriſt on his own tearmes.

For the firſt; That a man ſhould renounce himſelfe, and be nothing, it is the hardeſt ſtrait that Nature is put to, ſelfe being the principle and end of all mens actions by Nature, and that which lies diametrically oppoſite to the myſtery of godlineſſe, for a poor creature, whoſe Nature and actings, can comply with nothing but ſelfe, to abjure it, and caſt away all, yea abhore and loth ſelfe, as its miſſtery; what ſhall we thinke of this? can it amount to leſſe then a myſtery, to ſee Nature not only to be weakned, but turn'd againſt it ſelfe, and acting contrary to its owne principles? As to ſee light things deſcend,

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and heavy aſcend, and that againſt its nature. Selfe is the predominant principle of the world, it rules like the ſole Monarch, and there is no abſolute Monarch but ſelfe; it rules in the moſt noble naturall breaſts, and is that which is founded in the nature of things. But now, when a man beleeves he goes directly againſt naturall ſelfe, he ſaith he is nothing, nor can doe nothing; and not only is beleeving a denyall of the worſt ſelfe, ſin and luſt, (which yet is as a mans right eye, yea, as the Caule of a mans heart) but he denies honeſt ſelfe, and religious ſelfe, ſelfe dreſt and adorn'd, ſelfe righteouſneſſe and actings, ſelfe adorned with the moſt glorious endowments, and richeſt performances, ſelfe naturall and acquired, yea, and a ſoul contrary to all its motions, both rationall and ſeemingly godlie beleeves on Jeſus Chriſt. Take a raiſed and high ſpirit, one who hath built his neſt in the Starres, in regard of ſpeculation, and one whom the world can ſay nothing in regard of converſe unto; for him to come and ſubmit to a Chriſt, to throw downe all that ever he hath ſtudyed, as dung and droſſe, to deſcend and come into the lower parts of the earth, and looke on himſelfe as the pooreſt deſpicableſt, and undonneſt creature in the world; one that knowes not the way to happineſſe;

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(which he muſt doe, if he beleeve) why this is the myſterie. Selfe is ſometime ſo painted, acted in ſo much ſtate, and ſo ſpirituallized (as it were) ſet out with ſuch ornaments, both of nature, art, and morally ſpirituall gifts, that it would make any ſpirit in love with it: yet when a ſoule comes to beleeve on Chriſt, he muſt renounce all theſe as dung and droſſe, the worſt of things, in regard of ſaving his ſoule, or in compariſon of Jeſus Chriſt. This is death to a man; Nature would as lieve be damned, as entertaine ſuch a propoſition, and caſt it ſelfe out of ſuch a priviledge, that it looks on as its birth-right; yet there was no ſoule that ever beleeved on Jeſus Chriſt, but did willingly doe this. *Paul*, when he begins to reckon up his priviledges, both of his birth and education, and the ſtrictneſſe of his life, one would have thought he needed no more, *Phil.* 3. (and he thought ſo too) ſelfe was ſo richly accompliſhed, not only againſt the Law, but the Goſpel; he was borne in the Church, had the priviledges of a Saint, was blameleſſe in the Law; yet when he came to beleeve, he was glad to caſt away all this, as the off-ſcouring of the world; he was alive once, and thought himſelfe a glorious one; but he dyed to all theſe, they were all as dead things to him. For a man, not only to deny

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his luſts, that are his Nature, (and ſo deare, as many venture the wrath of God for) but his performances, which he hath been in for a long time, and throw down the glorious ſtructure of duty, he hath been building for 20, 30, 40 yeers together, with all the curious paintings of formality: You had better tell men of parting with God, Chriſt, Heaven, yea, of all the good of ſoule and body, rather then of ſuch a thing.

This ſelfe is the bottome and originall of all ſinne, it is that which is the very conſtitution of our Natures: Selfe hath been borne and bred with us; it lives in our boſomes, hath been the old companion in all our actions, and to be caſt off at laſt, and hated, is very hard; it is eaſier to change the courſe of the Sun, and turne Heaven into Earth, to place the Elements above, and the Starres beneath, to make the ſtream naturally run back from the ſame Fountaine it came, yea, to worke the greateſt miracle in Nature, then to make a man to deny himſelfe, eſpecially ſelfe ſo ingratiated and clothed with gifts and honeſtie, and righteouſneſſe of the Law. Yet when a man beleeves, this is the firſt thing done upon him, ſelfe is turn'd againſt ſelfe, Nature runs counter to its owne inclinations: that darling and firſt-borne of the ſoules delights and love

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is made the abomination of the heart, and the ſoule moſt ſet againſt it. Now let this be weighed, which yet is but the firſt, and rather implicite, and ſuppoſed act of Faith, then the Nature of it, and you cannot but conclude, that this is a great myſterie, that Chriſt ſhould be beleeved on in the world.

But 2. Which is yet farther; for a ſoul to cloſe in with Jeſus Chriſt, and fully to relye on him as his own, and expect all righteouſneſſe and grace in him alone, and nothing from himſelfe, firſt or laſt, (which is properly beleeving) this ſets it out yet farther:

For 1. It is a great venture for a ſoule to forſake ſelfe, its deareſt conſort, and leave all its ſtrong ingagements to the fleſh; for that which yet he hath no particular aſſurance of, but a bare tender and offer. No man in reaſon will part with any thing in poſſeſſion, but upon a certainty of a better; whereas the ſoule is ſtill in doubt of what it may injoy, though Chriſt be offered to all, yet ſome goe without him; and this may be the condition of the ſoule.

Yea, 2. To cloſe in with Chriſt, againſt whom it hath naturally the greateſt antipathy, and whom it never ſaw; to caſt all the weight of its joy and comfort on Chriſt, whom

whom the heart hath offended, and againſt whom it hath received ſuch prejudices, that his heart cannot indure him of any; this is exceeding ſtrange unto our apprehenſions. As *Abram* left all his owne Kindred, and Fathers houſe, and not knowing where he went, binding up his reaſon, and denying a preſent good, only on the ſecurity of a generall and indeterminate promiſe, was a miracle to all the world; for this is the Nature of Faith, on a bare word and promiſe to cloſe in with Chriſt, and venture its eternall comfort. Faith comes by hearing, and that of the word preached that is, of the word of promiſe. Now, for a ſoule ingaged thus to ſin, and luſt, and ſelfe, to leave all on a promiſe of a Chriſt, which yet, the ſoule is a ſtranger unto, and is darke in the knowledge of; this muſt needs be a myſtery; and that

3. If you conſider that it is not only a bare taking of Chriſt as at a ſhift, to make ſome preſent advantage of him, to rid a man out of fears, or preſerve him from wrath, which ſelfe may be willing unto, out of its owne principles; but it is a receiving Chriſt on his owne terms, a ſubmitting unto the tenure of all his commandements, it is taking Chriſt nakedly, with all his holineſſe, as well as his love, yea with all his incon-

inconveniences unto fleſh and blood, even to take up a Croſſe with him, lye downe in the grave with him; it is a giving up the ſoule unto Chriſt, to be what he will, and do what he will; that a ſoule beleeves not only for peace and joy, but for power and life, and is led captive for ever, unto the will of Chriſt; therefore it is called the obedience of Faith by the Apoſtle; this muſt needs be a myſtery, eſpecially if you conſider in the third place, the difficulties and diſadvantages the poor ſinner meets withall in the way, beſides that naturall darkeneſſe and ſtupidity which lies on our hearts, that we cannot judge of our own peace, and that averſneſſe from Faith in us, above any thing elſe. There be theſe difficulties riſe up, for a ſoule to leap over.

1. The greatneſſe of ſin, which when it is once diſcovered to an inlightned ſoul, is ſo great and vile, that it cannot imagine how it can be pardon'd, the Law preſſing ſo hard for ſatisfaction, and the ſoule can give none; when it thinks of God, he is ſo offended it thinks, that he will never have mercy. The ſinner is now put to it, in the full proſpect of ſuch a heart, of ſuch abominations, to goe to Chriſt for ſalvation, to beleeve all theſe ſins, though ſo amazing the ſoule, and of ſuch a damning Nature, to be all done away, and ſoe more

more righteouſneſſe in Chriſt, then ſin in it, this is a hard work.

But 2. That a ſoule ſhould beleeve at ſuch a time, when yet among all the reſt of its ſins, it hath ſuch a root of unbeliefe within it, ſpringing from the power of ſelfe-love, which keeps the ſoule under, raiſeth miſts before the eyes of the ſouls ſelfe and it, ſtriving to evade all the arguments of the Goſpell, to elude and baffle the ſoule, in all its apprehenſions of Chriſt. Unbeliefe ſaith, there is no ſuch thing as Chriſt, it is but a mockery, a deluſion, or elſe raiſeth up a duſt before the promiſe, that the ſoule may not ſee it for him; it tels the ſoule, it is to no end to thinke of pardon, thou art gone too farre to recover, it is too late, or elſe leſſens the riches of mercy, but multiplyes the miſery of ſin: Thus unbeliefe, like a ſtrong man uncontrouled, reignes in the heart. But which is more,

3. Senſe and reaſon ſtand unſatisfied, the ſoule can neither ſee cauſe why to beleeve, nor find any ground in it ſelfe, that if it believe, it muſt goe beyond experience, goe contrary to its own ſenſes, it feels nothing but the workings of deaths thorough ſin, ſees nothing but hell before its eyes, and a neceſſity of ſatisfying juſtice; it hath nothing viſibly held out to it, but a generall promiſe of a Chriſt,

which

which unbeliefe evades; it cannot ſee reaſon why God who hath been ſo highly diſpleaſed can ever paſſe by ſuch affronts, and take the ſoule into favour. Now, for a man to beleeve againſt his owne ſenſe and reaſon; as *Abram* beleeved againſt hope, and above hope, is a myſtery indeed: To venture a mans eternall happineſſe againſt his reaſon and ſence, on ſuch generall termes as at firſt is preſented to the ſoule, is the great wonder of the world; eſpecially if we yet look further and conſider,

4. What prejudices, and miſpriſions ſuch a ſinner hath of Chriſt. The Devill preſents him under cruell ſhapes to ſuch a ſoule, and unbeliefe is not backward to make hideous diſcoveries, as that he is not ſo rich, nor ſo mercifull; one which hath, but will not ſpare me, which hath a ſtock, but no heart; either they thinke he cannot, or will not give what the ſoule needs. Chriſt lyes remote from the eye of the ſoule, he is in Heaven, and they ſee not his heart, they muſt take things on truſt, receive him in the promiſes, and that ſeems to be an uncertaine way of aſſurance. That groſſe ignorance of the Nature of the Goſpell, of the parſon of Chriſt, is of it ſelfe invincible, and oh what conceits are raiſed up in the heart, againſt Jeſus Chriſt The

ſoule

ſoule will run to this, and that, rather then Chriſt; it will look to ſelfe, if it can find any thing there, which may give it but a little eaſe, (though it doe deceive it) rather then goe to Chriſt; it will court duties, and preformances, Saints and ordinances; if any of them will afford but a ſparke of comfort to it, that it may ſtay from Chriſt; for ſelfe and ſin cannot indure to heare a good word of Chriſt, the Antipathy is in nothing ſtranger.

Laſtly, view the requiſites to beleeving; what is required to make one believe, for it is above the power of Nature. Why?

1. There muſt a light from Heaven ſhine into our hearts. All the light of Nature and reaſon can never ſhew what Chriſt is, nor make a man capable of knowing any thing of this myſtery; *The naturall man knowes not the things of God, and it is impoſſible for him to diſcerne them.* 1 *Cor.* 2. Therefore *Paul*, when he ſpeaks of his converſion, he deſcribes it by a *light that ſhin'd from Heaven, above the light of the* Sun: He ſaith, *that Chriſt was revealed in him, Acts* 9. *Gal.* 1. Thus to make any ſoule beleeve, he muſt have a ſpirituall eye made on purpoſe, and that eye inlightned immediately from God; therefore you ſhall find beleeving and ſeeing all one in Scripture, becauſe Faith is a ſpirituall ſight of the Lord Jeſus. But

2. All this will not doe, but there muſt be an almighty power put forth, even as in creation, to make a ſoule beleeve, ſo the Apoſtle ſaith, *Eph.* 1. *that the ſame power is put forth to make ſoules beleeve*, that was, to raiſe up Chriſt from the dead; the ſoule lyes in ſuch darkneſſe, and hath ſuch an enmity to Chriſt, that nothing can reconcile it, or make a ſoule have good thoughts of Chriſt, but to create a new heart in him, there is no dealing with the old heart, or working on it, it will come to no termes of agreement at all; for we are not only enemies, but enmity it ſelfe, there is not only in us an incapacity, but an oppoſition. *Col.* 1 21. So the Apoſtle expreſſeth it, by the caſting downe ſtrong holds, imaginations, and every thing which exalteth it ſelfe againſt Jeſus Chriſt, 2 *Cor.* 10. 4. There are ſuch forts, which unbelieſe hath raiſed in the ſoule, ſuch ſtrong holds, and mighty ſtrange, and yet ſtrong imaginations againſt Jeſus Chriſt, that nothing but weapons made mighty thorough God, can caſt them downe. Theſe ſtrong holds are ſuch as will never yeeld, take no quarter; therefore they muſt be pull'd downe with a high hand; and there are imaginations, a thouſand reaſonings againſt Chriſt and the Goſpell, which can never be anſwered, but they muſt be caſt

downe.

downe. Chriſt muſt not only be ſet out of Heaven in light, and ſhowne unto a poore ſoule, but the power of the almighty God muſt come with him, and caſt downe all oppoſition againſt him, if all the Angels ſhould come elſe to perſwade the ſoule; nay, if Chriſt himſelfe ſhould come in his owne perſon without this power, he could not perſwade the ſoule out of its Forts. Therefore it is ſaid, *None can come to Chriſt, except the father draw him. John* 6. That is, none can ever beleeve on Chriſt, except God let out a mighty power, which may bring him. So Faith is called Faith of the operation of God, becauſe it is a worke peculiarly, that goes thorough his hands, it is beyond all other power to doe. To ſumme up all then, This muſt needs be a great myſtery, that Chriſt ſhould be beleeved on in the world; that darkneſſe ſhould comprehend light; enmity imbrace a union; that ſuch proud hearts as we have, ſhould be content to goe a begging to one we naturally hate; for a man to deny his ſenſe, reaſon, ſelfe, righteouſneſſe, luſts, prejudices, and ſubmit to an unknowne Chriſt, to be made nothing of, live at the finding of another. For this is the language of Faith; I am nothing, Chriſt is all, I cannot live without him.

In a word, there are the greateſt para-

doxes in the workings of Faith, as any thing.

Nothing living, as if it had all things: unrighteouſeneſſe making its ſelfe moſt righteous, a ſoule at the greateſt diſtance from God, going moſt boldly to him, one which hath moſt offended him, moſt relying on him, a ſoule which hath nothing but ſin, aſſured it ſhall have all grace, in the midſt of greateſt unworthineſſe, triumphing in the compleateſt righteouſneſſe: The greateſt enemy made ſubmit to the hardeſt termes to his Nature; with many ſuch are found in the acting of Faith, that you ſee what a myſtery is in this expreſſion; *beleeved on in the world*, and how it may be well rancked in the number of theſe great myſteries.

Uſe. 1. If this be ſo, then let ſhame cover our faces, that ever this ſhould be reckoned up as a myſtery, that we beleeve, that God ſhould manifeſt himſelfe to us, bring downe his owne glory to our eyes, offer life and immortality to us, and it ſhould be a wonder for us to take it; that God ſhould act in ſo much love unto us, and frame ſuch a Fabrick of glory, to take us into it, may well be a myſtery, who can expreſſe it? But that it ſhould be a myſtery for us to beleeve this, and to take God on his owne word, ſo faithfully ſpoken, is our miſery, though in it ſelfe a myſtery.

Muſt

Muſt it be a wonder for hungry creatures, to eat the bread ſet before them, and for beggers to take the Almes offer'd them? yet the Holy Ghoſt makes this a myſtery, that we beleeve on Jeſus Chriſt. What ſhould ſhame us more then this, that we have not a hand to take in our owne happineſſe, cannot ſwallow downe a drop of the water of life, except it be poured in us? What an aggravation muſt it be of our ſin, that we are harder to beleeve, and take in what God hath done for us, then for God to kill his owne Sonne, and part with him out of his owne bowels? We have nothing to doe but beleeve, and yet it is a wonder we doe beleeve. Oh ſtrange creatures; God manifeſted in fleſh, came in a ſenſible and demonſtrative way, of love and glory, to wooe poor ſinners, and yet they will not beleeve. Are you not yet aſhamed? what, ſhall God preſent his owne heart in blood to you, and yet you will not receive it. Chriſt is come as juſtification and righteouſneſſe, with peace and ſweetneſſe, and yet men will not beleeve; this is moſt unreaſonable and wicked.

2. *Uſe.* Have not ſlight thoughts of beleeving, it is not an ordinary worke; men thinke it is nothing to beleeve: If a man doe but live under the Goſpell, and have a generall profeſſion of it, he thinks he is a beleever.

Oh know Faith is the higheſt worke of a Chriſtian, that which is the acting of a myſtery; if thou didſt but know thy owne heart, and ſee thy ſinne, thou wouldſt wonder how ever thou cameſt to beleeve on Jeſus Chriſt. There is a common Faith indeed, which the world hath, but it is not worthy the name of Faith, a Faith which is meerly hiſtoricall and traditionall; but for the Faith here ſpoken of, the Faith of God's Elect, that is another manner of work; thou wilt find it a myſtery for thee to beleeve on Jeſus Chriſt. It is an eaſie matter for men to ſay they beleeve, when they ſee neither ſin nor Chriſt; but haſt thou ever had but an aſpect into thy owne ſinfull Nature, and a right knowlege of thy wretched ſtate, then tell me, whether Faith be a common or an eaſie thing; it is that which many ſoules ſee it harder to act then remove Mountaines. For a poore trembling ſoule, who ſtands on the brink of Hell, to leap into Chriſt's boſome, and ſuch a proud heart as thou haſt to be willing to be at the diſpoſing of Jeſus Chriſt, and make a totall reſignation of ſelfe, and all intereſt to Chriſt, yea, though thou mayeſt injoy them; this is Faith, and a great myſterie, therefore deceive not thy own heart.

3. *Uſe.* Let us from hence ſee, what is the

great

great thing the Goſpell requires of us; it is to believe, all is ſummed up in this; all the myſteries of the Goſpell are nothing to us without beleeving. Though God be manifeſted in fleſh, and juſtified in ſpirit, that is, made redemption and juſtification for us; yet if he be not beleeved on by the world, it is nothing to us. Faith brings down the particular ſweetneſſe and comfort of all this unto us, and puts us in actuall poſſeſſion of it; what ever God is to us before Faith, yet we have no benefit really by it untill we beleeve. Oh therefore, make this your work, admit of no exception, againſt beleeving, this is the great duty of the Goſpell, and the great way of God's revealing himſelfe to us; it is a taking hold of all that Chriſt doth, and hath for us, and gives us the actuall injoyment of it. God requires no more of us, but that we beleeve the work is done really for us in Chriſt's perſon, and this is preached unto us, and nothing elſe remaines, but the putting to our ſeal by Faith, that all is true: The blood of Chriſt is drawn out, and his graces run out in juſtification, and ſanctification, nothing is behind, but the laying of our mouths to his breſts, the ſtretching out of our hands, to receive in that life and righteouſneſſe which is purchaſed for us. Oh let not the work ſtick in you,

your beleeving doth as it were perfect the myſtery of the Goſpell. According as God hath diſcovered himſelfe, ſo ſhould we act Faith; the myſtery of God in Chriſt hath wrought exceeding ſtrongly; ſo ſhould our Faith. The myſtery of your ſalvation is opened, the materials of it made ready, and brought downe to you to take, only your worke is to beleeve, lay hold on them by Faith. God in fleſh condemned, and juſtified in ſpirit, is preached to you, that you may beleeve. The blood of Chriſt is ſhed, and fitly temper'd for to quiet your conſciences; only your mouth muſt be opened wide to receive it. Faith is nothing elſe but the eying of what Chriſt hath done, and taking it home to its ſelfe, and living in the myſtery as its owne. Oh now, God hath done all ſo well, will not you ſet to your ſoule that it is true? By beleeving you witneſſe unto all the other myſteries. The Apoſtle ſaith, *he that beleeveth not hath made God a lyer, becauſe he beleeveth not the record that God hath given of his Son.* 1 *John* 5. 10. Unbeliefe belies God in all he hath done for us: Let Faith have no ſtop nor ſtint in its actings; ſuffer no contrary objections to believing; as the riches and righteouſneſſe of God are laid out before you, and demonſtrated to your very ſenſes, ſo give faithfull witneſs

to

to all by beleeving; the more you beleeve, the more you get the ſweetneſſe of all this fulneſſe, and you act in the myſtery your ſelfe; for not only Chriſt but your Faith on him, is part of the great myſtery of godlineſſe.

SERMON X.

1 Tim. 3. 16.

Received up into Glory.

WE are now come to the laſt ſtep of this long aſcent, at the top of which, you have the full ſight of all divine workings; God ſeems to begin low, takes fleſh upon him, and is condemned; but then riſeth higher, and is juſtified in the ſpirit, and admired by Angels, preached in power to the *Gentiles*, yea, and beleeved on in the world, and now received up into Glory. This notes the higheſt advancement of our Nature, in the Perſon of Jeſus Chriſt. The great ſubject of this myſtery, is Jeſus Chriſt, he is the centre in which all theſe lines end, the great and common

mon repreſentative of all the Elect; and he is ſet forth here, as under diverſe formes and conditions he paſt through, and the ſeverall wayes of his manifeſtation to the creature, as condemned and juſtified, as admired and preached, and beleeved on in the world, and now at laſt, as received up into glory. And it is no more then to ſet forth the three great acts which Chriſt did, as Mediatour for us, in tranſacting our ſalvation; he was manifeſt in fleſh, to dye for our ſins, he roſe againe for our juſtification, he aſcended up into Heaven, to ſit at Gods right hand for us. This is put in oppoſition unto his loweſt extremity of humiliation for us. He that deſcended, alſo aſcended farre above the Heavens. So that now we muſt view this myſtery as in another world, and follow it up to Heaven, where it is acted in glory.

The greateſt part is yet behind, it ſeems now to be gone out of ſight; as the ſun, when it is gone from our Horiſon, begins a new day in another part of the world: So God having acted that part of the myſtery which was for this world, takes him up into Glory, there to act the reſt in a new and bleſſed way. By glory is meant Heaven, where Gods ſets forth his glory moſt.

For the cleerer opening of this, I ſhall propound theſe things? 1. Who

1. Who, or what it is, that is taken up into glory.

2. What it doth import and comprehend?

3. The myſtery which is in it.

For the firſt; It is no other but Jeſus Chriſt, who was God manifeſt in fleſh, who after he had ſuffered, entred into his glory, having done his worke, as the Apoſtle ſaith, *he entred into his reſt, Heb.* 4. He came out of the lap of his Fathers love, into a wide and miſerable world, to lead a contemptible and mean life, in the form of a ſervant, and having finiſhed his courſe, is againe taken up into that glory, and high dignity from whence he came. This was the prayer of Chriſt, that when he had ended his worke in the world, that God would reſtore him to that glory he had with him, from the beginning of the world, *John* 17. He left his place for a while, ſeemed to be turned out of it, as one not worthy of it, untill he ſhould purchaſe it by his owne blood. He was let fall out of glory into a forme of miſery, and loſt his ſtation for a while, and againe is reſtor'd to it, with an addition of higheſt honour.

That this is meant properly of the perſon of Chriſt is cleer, for the ſame is receiv'd up to glory, who was God manifeſt in fleſh, and juſtified in ſpirit, who died and roſe againe;

that

that none of the Saints did, neither can any other be ſaid to be ſeen of Angels, nor preached to poor ſinners, nor is any the object of Faith, but Jeſus Chriſt; but yet this muſt be granted, that myſtically, and repreſentatively, the Saints likewiſe are received up into glory with him, as I ſhall ſhew anon; and if you will that Jeſus Chriſt that in the names of all the Elect was condemned, and made a ſacrifice for ſin, and juſtified in the Spirit in their ſtead, that Chriſt is alſo received up into glory as in their ſtead.

But ſecondly, what doth this hold forth, that Chriſt is received up into glory? You muſt looke on this as containing a glorious deſigne, and a great part in the ſalvation of ſoules.

1. It implies a compleat finiſhing of that worke he had to do for us here, that there was no more to be done in this world for us, that the ſatisfactory worke to juſtice was finiſhed, and he and his ſacrifice accepted before God; *Heb.* 10. having by one offering perfected thoſe which are ſanctified; he entred into the holieſt place, *viz.* heaven, and there ſate down at the right hand of God, having no more to do, juſtice being ſatisfied, juſtification for ſinners procured; this was evident when he roſe againe: For if he had not paid the debt,

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he had never come out of priſon; but much more evident ſeeing he is received up into heaven, taken into the Fathers boſome: many break priſon, and walke up and down ſecurely, as if all were paid, but they dare not come in the face of the Court and behold the Judge, or come nigh any of their Creditors; this is the greateſt ground of ſecurity that can be poſſible, that ſin is done away, and that redemption is purchaſed, becauſe that Chriſt is received up into glory; God would never have let Chriſt come ſo nigh him, if he had any of the ſmell of his grave-cloaths on him; had left any one ſin unſatisfied for.

2. It imports not only a bare ſatisfaction of juſtice, but clearly demonſtrateth how infinitely God is pleaſed with Jeſus Chriſt, and what he hath done, that his heart is contented, and he hath over and over pleaſed him; many a broken debt may be paid by a third penny, and compoſition, and the Creditor pronounce ſatisfaction in Law: But Chriſt did not agree ſo with God by way of compoſition, but Chriſt paid the utmoſt farthing that juſtice could command, and in ſuch a way that God is infinitely taken with him and his Oblation, and ſo delighted in him, as that he thinkes him not fit to ſtay any longer in this world, but takes him up to glory, cannot be without him

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in heaven, gives him a name above every name; that he may aske what he will, he hath the command of all Gods treaſuries, of all his riches.

When Chriſt went up and downe the world, and was but about the work, he could not hold but muſt ſend the Spirit to proclaime to all the world, *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleaſed*; as if he had ſaid, Whatever he ſhall do I will accept: But now how much more when he hath ſo faithfully acted out his will, and is received up into his glory; and is received up into his glory, is God pleaſed with him? It is ſaid, that Chriſt entred into heaven there to appeare before God for us. As a confident Debtor, who hath paid the Creditor, comes into the Court and askes, who hath any thing to ſay to him, he owed no man a farthing, all is paid, let the Law take its courſe: So did Chriſt, he entred into heaven as one asking juſtice, what will you have more for poore ſinners? here I am, if the Law hath any thing to ſay to theſe ſoules which I have dyed for: have not I given ſatisfaction to the utmoſt? I here appeare to anſwer in their behalfe who cannot ſpeake for themſelves; Juſtice is ſilent, gives the acquittance, and God ſets Chriſt down at his right hand; no place, no honour and advancement is too

good

good for him who hath purchaſed ſo much; So that now a poore ſoule by faith may ſee a diſcharge indeed of all ſin; do but thinke that Chriſt is taken up into glory, and there cannot remaine a thought that any ſin is unſatisfied for; God is pleaſed ſo as that nothing but glory is to be expected.

3. This imports a new deſigne to be acted in heaven for us; he is taken up into glory that he may act glorioufly the ſecond part of our happineſſe; he acted one part in fleſh, in the habit of a begger cloathed with rags: He is now gone to act the perſon of a Prince in robes of glory, and all this to mannage our ſalvation in the richeſt way that can be; he is now gone to follow his bloud, and to get all into his own hands, that he may make ready manſions of glory for us. Two great things Chriſt acts for us now in glory, which is of exceeding conſequence to the ſalvation of our ſoules.

Firſt, He is in place of an Advocate for us, *Heb.* 7. 25. he lives to intercede for us; he is alwaies begging of favour and love for us; he lies there to ſtop whatever plea may be brought in againſt us by the Devill, or the Law: So that no ſin can come in to make plea there but Chriſt anſwers it with his old ſatisfaction; he is there to get out freſh pardons for new ſins. Secondly,

Secondly, He is the great provider and caterer for us, againſt we come there he is laying up a ſtore and ſtock of glory for us; he went before to take up Gods heart for us, and now is drawing out the riches of love from him, and laying it in banke for us; therefore the Apoſtle ſaith, *My God ſhall ſupply your wants according to his riches in glory*; now he is in glory, he intimating that Chriſts riches lye in glory, and now he hath the poſſeſſion of them all. And this is that which thirdly is here ſo great a part of the *Myſtery of Godlineſſe*; that God who was *manifeſted in fleſh* ſhould be *received up into glory*; he who dwelt in glory, and was nothing but glory, ſhould yet be repreſented as at a diſtance from glory, and ſaid to be received into it; but eſpecially the myſtery lies in this: That Chriſt went not up as a ſingle perſon, but taking up as a common perſon, carrying all the Elect with him; whatever was to be done on us was done repreſentatively, and vertually on Chriſt as in our nature; he dyed as a common perſon, and was juſtified as a common perſon, and ſo now he is received up into glory he went not up alone; but though it is meant properly of his perſon, yet vertually, and myſtically it is meant of all the Saints, they were all taken up with Jeſus Chriſt into glory; not that they

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are ſo actually, but myſtically as in Chriſt their head. And this is the deſigne, God comming downe to us to bring us up to himſelfe, letting aſide his glory, from whence we were departed, and then taking it up againe, and us with him. It is no myſtery for Chriſt as God to be in glory, ſo he cannot be ſaid to be received into it, for he never was without it, but it is meant of his humane nature. Neither was Chriſts humane nature received up for it ſelfe, but as it was a figure of us; Chriſts perſon was the great modell, and firſt draught of all that ſhall be done to his body the Saints, therefore he is ſaid to be the Captaine of our ſalvation that leads us all on, and our forerunner into heaven; he breakes the clouds firſt, appeares firſt before God, and is glorified, then we follow; Chriſt wears the Crown in heaven as our King, and he is united and married to God as our Proxy.

This is the myſtery, poor ſinners taken into glory with Jeſus Chriſt, God himſelfe in our own nature is gone into glory for us. Chriſt is not only gone to heaven to prepare a place for us, *Joh.* 14. but ſits in heaven in our roome, and God looks on him as the great Picture of all that body, and delights himſelfe in ſeeing them all glorified as in him. And even the Saints now are ſaid to ſit downe with Chriſt already, *Eph.* 2. (*in ſupercaleſtibus*) in heavenly places, in

ſupercœleſtiall plàces. And as though now we be the Sons of God we know not what we ſhall be when we come to glory, but that we ſhall be like Chriſt; ſo though we know Chriſt is gone up to glory, yet what new myſtery he acts there, and how he acts out our ſalvation as in glory, we know not untill we be actually taken up into the ſame glory, we have but hints of that tranſaction.

Uſe. 1. What a ſtately Tower have we erected for to ſee heaven on? What a faire proſpect have we of the heavenly ſtate of bleſſed ſoules? Faith may ſtand on this mount and ſee it ſelfe in glory; it is like ſome optique glaſſes, which bring in all which is done without in the ſtreets into one roome; this expreſſion opens heaven to every beleever, and ſo fully that he cannot but ſee glory. Is Chriſt received up into glory? What is this but the inveſting all Saints with the ſame priviledge; your faith is led up very high to take in glory it ſelfe. Faith ſtands very lofty when it may both ſee earth and heaven at once, all that God hath acted for it here, and all that he will act in heaven. Faith ſhould eye Chriſt as far as he goes; if he be aſcended, ſo ſhould faith; if he go into glory, ſo ſhould you alſo by beleeving Jeſus Chriſt is lifted up, thus that we might be drawn after him; it is a great encouragement to us to think that

that Chriſt was dead for our ſins, and is riſen againe as our juſtification: But much more that Chriſt is gone into glory, and hath carried all our names with him into the Father boſome; beleevers ſhould look on Chriſt under a twofold notion.

1. As one from whom all their happineſſe comes; as a head ordained on purpoſe to convey life and influence unto the ſoule; one who is filled with all fulneſſe to fill them.

2. As the plat-forme and idea of what they ſhall be, and this is a high conſideration, that Saints may not only have from Chriſt, but expect to be what he is; looke whatever God acted on the perſon of Chriſt, that he did as in our behalfe, and meanes to act the ſame on us: was Chriſt crucified? ſo are we; as he roſe againe, ſo are we raiſed together with him, and if he be taken up into glory, ſo are we. Oh how ſhould faith ſtand and gaze on Jeſus Chriſt now he is in glory; not an ordinary and meane act of faith will come up into this myſtery, ſuch a faith only as ſets the ſoule in heaven, and puts it in a condition of glorious triumph becomes this expreſſion; heaven is not only opened, but poſſeſſed by Jeſus Chriſt for us. Faith goes to Chriſt as dying and riſing againe, and ſo beleeves its remiſſion of ſins and juſtification; but yet faith is low while it doth not go within the vaile

and ſee glory. Saints ſhould not rejoyce in preſent acts, but live on future glory, as it was with the Jews at that time when the high Prieſt went into the *holy of holies*, (which was very ſeldome) yet then they ought to have higher joy in beleeving, becauſe they ſaw the utmoſt of their happineſſe repreſented then when meerly they ſaw the bullock killed for ſin. So now that Chriſt is gone into glory, the holy place not made with hands, we ſhould not only have a faith of juſtification, but of glorification; you may anticipate the condition of heaven it ſelfe, and your actuall poſſeſſion of that by beleeving; when faith lookes down and ſees Chriſt on the Croſſe, and his bloud running out to ſatisfie wrath, it cannot chooſe but thinke that righteouſneſſe is procured, eſpecially when we ſee him riſe againe; but now when we look up higher, and ſee Chriſt taken into glory, what can we have leſſe than a glorious faith?

Uſe. 2. And now ſeeing I am falne on this, I cannot chooſe but bewaile our ſtupidity, and reprove our folly; how miſerable do beleevers live? Where is the ſpirit of glory that ſhould be on them? When *Stephen* ſaw Jeſus at the right hand of God (though but for a moment) his face did ſhine like glory, *Acts* 8. How many are there that never came up yet to act faith in Chriſt as a glorified Chriſt? We are yet ſtill in the

the lower forme, can take in no more of Chriſt than what was done on the Croſſe, what ſome naturall and common reſemblances of him can hold forth; we ſeldome follow Chriſt into heaven to ſee what he is doing there for us: many profeſſe to live immediately on God, and to be in glory already, but we cannot ſee their faces ſhine, their outward man ſcarce as glorious as common profeſſors. It were well if we could ſee Chriſt in his glory; ſuch a ſight would be transforming of ſoules indeed; we ſhould live not only as men borne for glory, but as in glory, as theſe that have not only one foot in the grave, but one foot in heaven; heaven is not only let down to you in the frame and picture of it, but you are taken into it in the perſon of the Lord Jeſus; you may not only dreame of heaven, but enjoy it; and you that live below glory live below Chriſt who is received up into glory.

Uſe. 3. This cannot but heighten the joyes, and inlarge the comforts of the Saints, when they do but conſider that Chriſt is received up into glory. In beleeving this, what can they finde leſſe than joy unſpeakable and full of glory. For,

Firſt, Now Jeſus Chriſt is accepted of the Father for them, and hath declared glorioufly that his heart is at reſt in the workes of his hands, and that he is well pleaſed with you; for

in this condition he could never elſe have received Chriſt into heaven: if there were any frownes left in Gods face, you might be ſure Chriſt ſhould have them, firſt he comming ſo nigh him; and if any flawes were in your pardon, or any exception againſt his ſatisfaction, he had heard of it, and would have been turned out of heaven untill he had made full payment; thou needeſt not doubt acceptance at the throne of grace and to find a bleſſed welcome to God, when Jeſus Chriſt is accepted for thee, and thou commeſt in ſuch a relation.

Secondly, Now he is in a capacity of acting out all his love, and the Fathers deſire in the moſt glorious way to thee; Chriſt is gone into heaven to do ſomething more for thee ſtill; he had ſome glorious piece to frame for the Saints, and therefore left this world and went to his Father, that he might act it in glory, and now he is inveſted with all the riches of heaven; he hath all the keys of heaven and hell, he hath all power to command, he hath received all the promiſe to himſelfe, and all that he hath to do is to empty himſelfe againe on you; he hath not only got his fathers heart for you, but got all his riches to beſtow on you; he cares not as it were for his own advancement, but only as it is the advantage to glorifie you; and now he can do what he will; when he came to heaven,

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he Father bid him ſit down at his right hand and take what he would, he would have no more to do with the world, but he ſhould beſtow what he had among his Saints; this ſhould be the reward of his death; all judgement is committed to the Son, the Father judges no man, *Joh.* 10. he hath given away all his prerogatives unto Jeſus Chriſt.

Thirdly, As Chriſt is received up into glory to act for you, and to bring you to glory, ſo he ſits in heaven to repreſent you; he is there as a publike perſon, and God ſees you all in him; he doth but occupy your place, and imploy your ſtock before you come to yeares, all you muſt be gathered into his fulneſſe, and received up into the ſame glory; he cannot be contented with that glory he hath untill you be with him, then he ſtill praies the Father ſo earneſtly that you may be with him where he is, *Joh.* 17. that they may ſee (that is, enjoy my glory) if Chriſt intended to reſigne up his place, and all his glory when once his Saints were come about him; he is but as Feoffee in truſt with your eſtate; & how will Chriſt improve it for you who hath ſuch an opportunity? And which is more, what kind of glory muſt that needs be which is the honour and the happineſſe of Jeſus Chriſt, which is his higheſt advancement as Mediatour.

Therefore every Saint ſhould expect every

ſight of Chriſt as glorious to wait on the Lord Jeſus for glorious manifeſtations of himſelfe, and in the next place expect to ſee himſelfe in glory; do not only remember that you have a head in glory, who can ſupply your wants, but remember that you are there with him, and that his Crowne is as it were a burthen on his own head untill it be ſet on yours; live according to the rate of ſuch a myſtery; aske of Chriſt communications according to his riches in glory; let all your actings be glorious, all your walkings, joyes, breathings, let them all be as in glory; view Chriſt, and ſee him as in that relation and condition, and you will ſoone have the ſparkles of the ſame glory on your hearts; bound not your faith and expectations within this poore world, and the enjoyments of it, but ever and anon caſt glances into glory, and if you will be in ſuch an eſtate, you muſt get Chriſt that is received up into glory in you, as the hope of glory, *Col.* 1.27. It is only as Chriſt breakes forth in your hearts by faith that you come to have ſuch ſights of glory; that glorified perſon that is now in heaven muſt be in you by his ſpirit of glory, or elſe you can have no hope of glory; beleevers, you ſee your object, you know his perſon, never be quiet untill you come into his condition; as you muſt go through all ordinances and creatures untill you come to Chriſt,

Chriſt, ſo through all the conditions of Chriſt untill you come to glory.

Let us now view it in the whole as it were, as it concernes Chriſt and the *Saints* together, and this is the end of that, it is received up into glory, As God in Chriſt was condemned in fleſh, ſo are the *Saints*, and juſtified in the ſpirit, ſo are they; and at laſt they with Chriſt are received up into glory.

Queſt. Now the great queſtion is, How Chriſt and the *Saints* are received up into glory?

Sol. As for Chriſt, it is cleare that he was taken up in his humane nature; as he was God-man in the world, ſo he is now in heaven, Jeſus Chriſt hath a reall body now in glory as he had in the world: But it is taken into glory, and ſo a glorious body, *Phil.* 3. *ult.* In any other reſpect Chriſt could not be taken up into glory, for nothing wanted it but his humane nature: And ſo muſt all the *Saints* be received into glory in the ſame way, not only in their ſoules but bodies, for the *Saints* have not phantaſmes in heaven, they are not annihilated in their being, and made in another eſſentiall forme, but are taken into glory in regard of the whole man as it conſiſts of body and ſoule. For that place in 1 *Cor.* 15. where it is ſaid, *fleſh and bloud cannot inherit the kingdome of heaven*, therefore no reall bodies ſhall be there. It is anſwered, that the meaning

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is, fleſh and bloud without a change, as it is mortall and weake, not ſimply the being of fleſh and bloud; but it is expounded in the ſame verſe, neither can corruption inherit incorruption, that is, no fleſh and bloud, as ſubject to corruption, as it is weake and ſinfull, ſhall not enter in: For it ſhall be made a ſpirituall body, ſtill a body, but ſpirituall and free from corruption, having a being of immortality put to it.

And this is ſo cleare as it cannot be denied, except we will imagine a chimæra of a man without ſoule or body; let this be conſidered, whether the man that ſinned ſhall not be ſaved, the ſame individuall man; if the man, then certainlie both in his ſoule and body, without which he is no man, the being of him as a man lying in the *compoſitum*. And beſides, the ſame that is redeemed muſt be ſaved, now we are redeemed in ſoule and body; but yet this body ſhall be a glorious body, ſo changed, as that whatever may denote weakeneſſe and corruption ſhall be done away, it ſhall put on incorruption. And how ſtrange is this, that the ſame man which is juſtified, and ſanctified, ſhall not be glorified. But I leave that as the excreſcency of the pride of this wanton age, who would frame a glory to themſelves out of their own fancie.

Let all us know, that Chriſt and his body ſhall be taken up in their ſoules and bodies to one

one and the ſame glorie; and though now we dwell in houſes of clay, and walke in raggs of duſt and aſhes, we ſhall one day be taken into glorie. This ſhould comfort us in all conditions, that this is not our place, and draw out our ſpirits to ſcorne this world, and to breath and long after another fulneſſe which is to be revealed; the more high and aſpiring our ſpirits are from the world, and all enjoyments to that glorie into which we are to be taken, the more we expreſſe our aſſurance of it. And this glorie is ſo great, that there is no taking it in, but we are received up into it. Oh what a bleſſed time will that be when the whole man ſhall be caſt into glorie, loſt as it were in glorie as in an infinite Ocean.

Thus I have preſented in a ſhort view to your eyes that which hath been acted from eternitie, and will be yet acted to eternitie: It is little hath been ſaid to what might have, and to what ſhall be really done. I have only ſhewed you the things in a rude lumpe, let you ſee the outſide of inward and unexpreſſible glory. I have glanced at that which will be the proſpect of the ſtrongeſt eyes for ever; but alas, who is able for theſe things? God muſt act it in us that we may know it in it ſelfe; it is a worke for the ſpirit of the living God, who ſearcheth the deep things of him.

I ſhall only in concluſion ſum up all, and ſet before your eye a ſmall map of the whole continent of this myſtery, that you may ſee what God is adoing for poore ſinners; the Apoſtle comprehends all in this expreſſion of a myſtery, and a great myſtery, and then laies it out in theſe particulars which are enumerated in this verſe; *God manifeſted in fleſh*, &c. Here is a chaine of myſteries, the firſt end of it is tyed to Gods heart, and the other end's in glory; in the whole you may take notice of theſe things:

1. The plot and deſigne.
2. The contrivance of it.
3. The way of acting it.
4. The effecting and iſſue of it.

The plot was to ſave ſo many poore ſinners, who lay in the bottome of hell, and had ſo offended God, as that nothing but eternall wrath was their portion; the ſpring of this, and inviſible wheeles from whence it was acted, was Gods eternall love and goodneſſe, that he might diſcover it freely to his creatures, becauſe this deſigne might go on glorious.

It was contrived that the ſame nature which ſinned ſhould ſave, and that the manifeſtation of God ſhould not be untill the time of the ſin, and miſery of the poore creature; and that the riches of love might be ſhowne, wiſdome contrived, that God himſelfe in another forme ſhould act

act out all our ſalvation. Thus God comes to be *manifeſted in fleſh*, and cals himſelfe Chriſt; takes up our nature, and joynes it to his God-head to be one perſon, and in that perſon dies, and ſuffers, and ſatisfies himſelfe, and is juſtified as in our ſtead; he himſelfe is made that to us which we were to be made; he makes that perſon for the glory of the tranſaction, a head to Angels and men, and preſents him to the view of theſe bleſſed creatures that they might admire him; and then, as a way to manifeſt it to us, makes a Goſpell which ſhall containe the ſum of all this deſigne, and cauſeth it to be preached and proclaimed to all the world; and becauſe there was nothing in the creatures at all to move him, it is to be preached freely, and that to the Gentiles, to the worſt of ſinners, without exception; and then theſe poore ſinners which have been thus loved, they beleeve on it, entertaine it joyfully, are made one with this perſon thus ſet forth, have all applied to themſelves, and then this perſon, and all theſe ſoules are taken up unto glory together, and enjoy the fulneſſe of God himſelfe; this is the Epitome of the myſtery: but every particular, as well as the whole, is a great myſtery, and paſt the apprehenſion of men and Angels to fathome.

The whole work of *S*alvation is acted by none other than God himſelfe in ſeverall manifeſtations;

feſtations; firſt, in the perſon of Chriſt, and that in ſeverall habits: and then in us and that in ſeverall conditions; but ſtill it is God acting towards us, and acting towards him. God comes down from heaven, and acts out his love to us in five various formes, and under divers conſiderations, and as he goes along gathers us into it, and then at laſt goes up againe into glory and carries all us with him; he lets down Chriſt as a platforme of his own love, and makes him act before our eyes all his glory, and then according to the ſeverall out-goings of his love diſcovers him to us, and at laſt wraps us up with Jeſus Chriſt into his own fulneſſe: glory was the end, that was the condition which we were deſigned unto; but God lets out this glory firſt in ſeverall ſparkles, and then contracts them all in himſelfe againe, and receives us up into it; herein lie myſteries like mountaines one upon another, and they reach up to the heavens; not a manifeſtation of God but hath in a myſtery beyond all the apprehenſions of the whole world; love breaks out in a direct line, but as it goes along, winds up it ſelfe in ſuch a variety of contrary and unthought of diſcoveries, as that it amazeth men and Angels; So that this is the totall, God acting in Chriſt, and he in us, and both received up into his infinite fulneſſe, which is here called glory.

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Oh therefore to conclude all, let all your ſpirits be taken up in the admiration of theſe myſteries; what we cannot expreſſe, do you labour to enjoy, take not up your heads and hearts with trifles, ordinary, and low things, when you have ſuch depths of love and wiſdome to ſtudy and enjoy the ſweetneſſe of, thinke nothing worthy of a glance of your eye, or a thought of your heart, but this *Great myſtery of Godlineſſe.* And in all your apprehenſions of the Goſpell wonder not if you ſee not at firſt the glory and beauty of them, you muſt conſider there is a myſtery in every one of them, thinke not in a ſlight and ordinary glance to underſtand divine myſteries, they will take up the moſt ſerious and moſt ſublime thoughts, and ſwallow them up at the very entrance on them.

Get the key of divine myſteries if you will open them exactly, that is, the Spirit of the Lord; ſence and reaſon will never unlock the depths of ſuch myſteries, he which will know the mind of God muſt have his own Spirit to reveale it. Foure things are required to all knowledge: An Eye, an Object, a Medium, and Light, the Object is ſuppoſed.

1. There muſt be an organ or capacity to ſee, though things be never ſo cleare, no man can ſee without an Eye, therefore the naturall man cannot ſee the things of God, becauſe he wants

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an Eye; you muſt get a ſpirituall eye, a divine judgement, for, whatſoever is received in, is *per medium recipientis*, your old underſtandings will not ſerve to judge of Goſpell myſteries.

2. You muſt have a divine light to ſhine on this Object before you can ſee it; Chriſt is in himſelfe out of ſight, and the myſteries of the Goſpell are too far above all the light of nature and reaſon too, and therefore the light of the *Spirit* muſt be waited on.

3. You muſt have a fit medium to convey this light to your eye, and that is the Word of God in the Scriptures, through that word the Spirit ſhines, and opens the light and beauty of theſe truths to us. *Study* the *Scriptures*, wait on the *Spirit* in them, and you ſhall know the deep things of God; and I may adde this as the laſt, get the power and life of truth in your hearts, and then you will ſoone know the myſtery; get your hearts wrapt up in the life and beauty of truth, and you will ſoone know the meaning of it.

FINIS.